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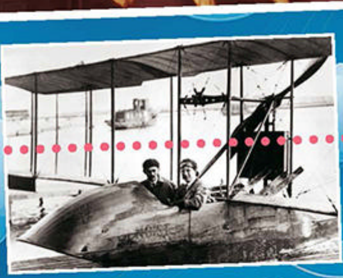

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From balloons to Concorde

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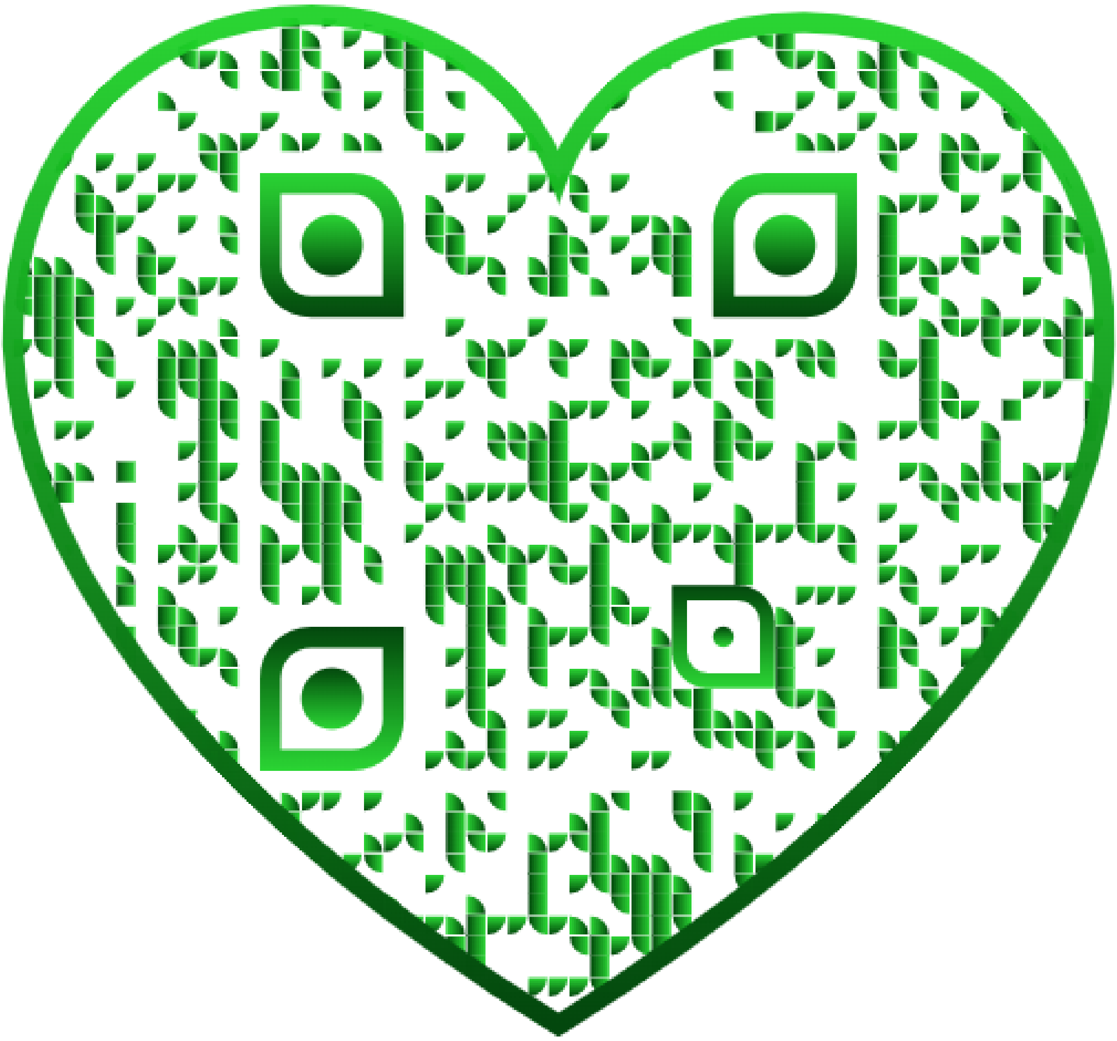
FUTURE
ISSUE 156
PRINTED IN THE UK £5.75
56
9 772052 587051



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Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Editorial
Editor **Jonathan Gordon**
jonathan.gordon@futurenet.com
Art Editor **Kym Winters**
Features Editor **Callum McKelvie**
Staff Writer **Emily Staniforth**
Production Editor **Iain Noble**
Editor in Chief **Tim Williamson**
Senior Art Editor **Duncan Crook**

Contributors
Catherine Curzon, Louis Hardiman, Emma Southon,
Jackson van Uden, David Williamson

Cover images
Dan Strange, Adobe Stock, Alamy

Photography and illustration
Dan Strange, Kevin McGivern, Adrian Mann,
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Media packs are available on request
Advertising Sales Director **Lara Jaggon**
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Graduate Sales Executive **Sophie Dickinson**
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Printed by William Gibbons & Sons

Distributed by Marketforce UK, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London, W2 6QA www.marketforce.co.uk

ISSN 2052-5870

UK annual subscription price is £74.75. The European annual subscription price is €158. The US annual subscription price is $178.

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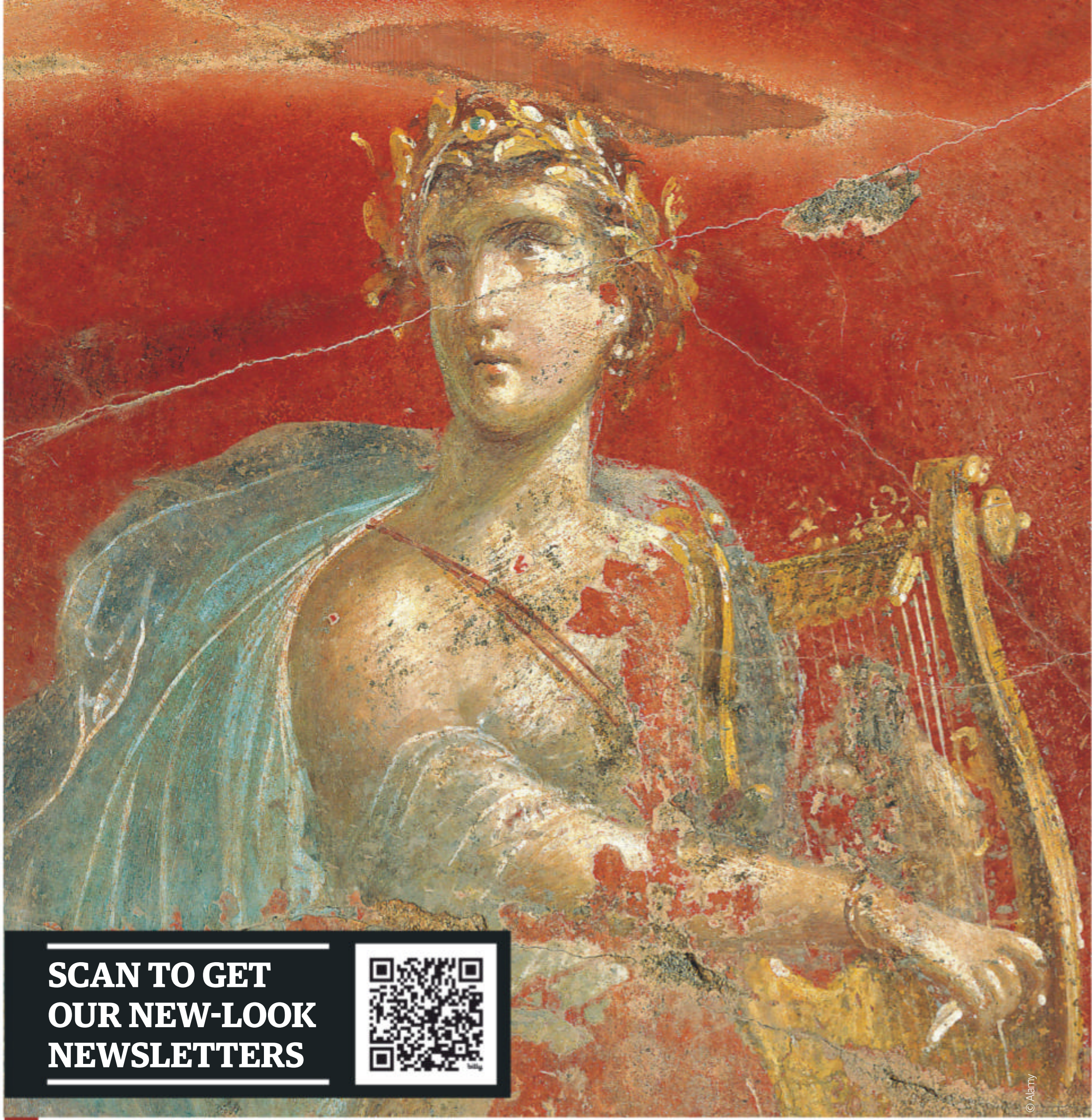
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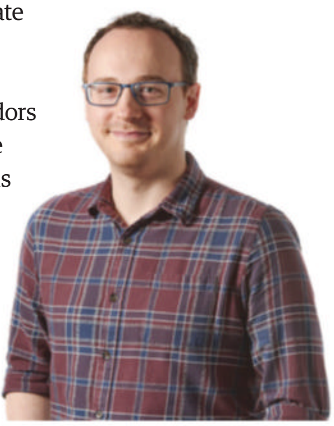
SCAN TO GET
OUR NEW-LOOK
NEWSLETTERS

Nero's passion for performance may have inspired the legend that he 'fiddled as Rome burned'

Welcome

The adage goes that 'history is written by the victors', but it's also often written by the vindictive. Having an axe to grind is a tremendous incentive to put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard, as the comment sections of most news and social media sites today can attest. The further back in time we go the more we are left to rely on the records of the victors and vengeful alike to impart the truth of things. So it is with Rome and the reign of Emperor Nero. Portrayed as one of the greatest monsters to ever hold the office, there are few who have a kind word to say about him. But is this fair? Is there evidence in other records or in the construction of Rome itself that tells a different story of this ruler?

We turn to Dr Emma Southon to answer these questions as she breaks down the facts and fictions around one of history's most infamous tyrants in our cover feature. Elsewhere we learn about the strangest folk tales from the American frontier, uncover the life of the woman who inspired the Taj Mahal, investigate the rebellions that challenged the authority of the Tudors and dig through the forgotten inventions of history's greatest minds. I hope you enjoy the issue.



Jonathan Gordon
Editor

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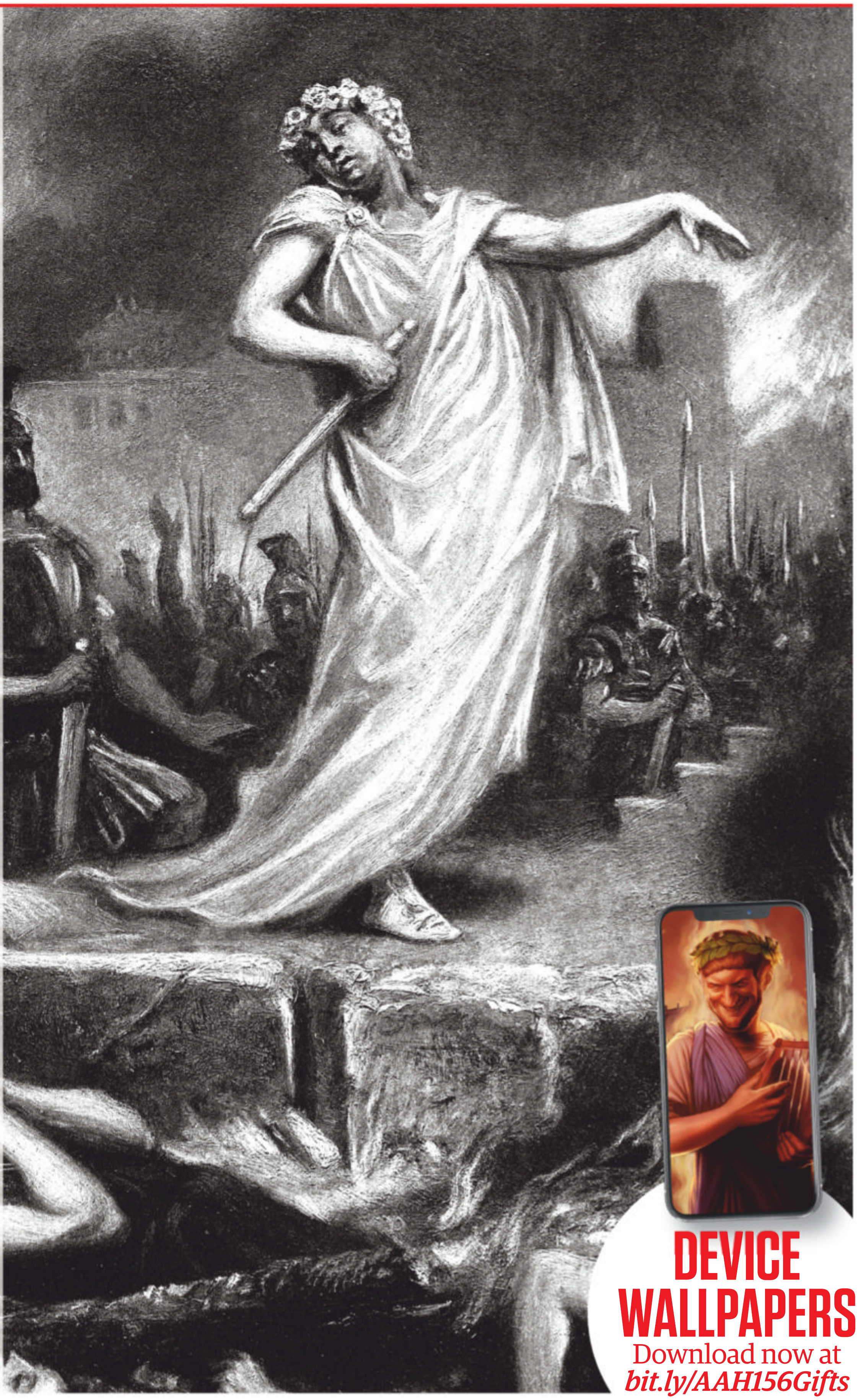

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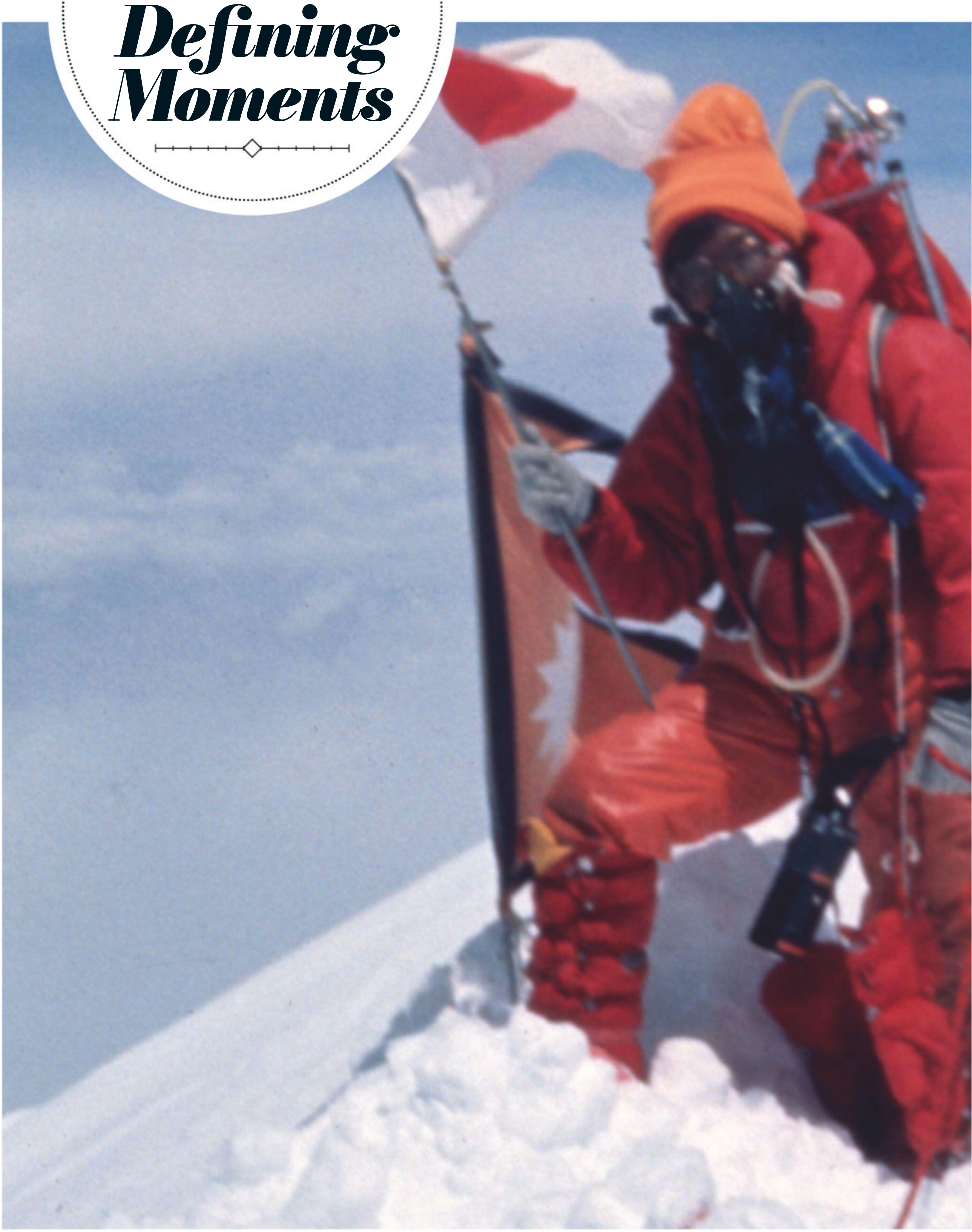
Defining Moments



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16 May 1975

FIRST WOMAN TO SUMMIT EVEREST

Japanese mountaineer Junko Tabei became the first woman to stand atop Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, after climbing the Himalayan mountain as part of an all-female expedition. Their ascent was fraught with danger: 12 days before reaching the summit Tabei and four of her fellow climbers were buried in an avalanche. Tabei's feat earned her international fame and in 1992 she became the first woman to climb each of the Seven Summits – the highest mountains on each continent.

© Getty Images

21 May 1972

MICHELANGELO'S *PIETÀ* ATTACKED

One of Italian sculptor Michelangelo's most famous works, the *Pietà* is a marble statue depicting the Madonna and Christ. Considered to be one of the most important artworks of the Renaissance, the sculpture is housed in St Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. In 1972, the *Pietà* was damaged when geologist Laszlo Toth attacked it with a hammer, shouting: "I am Jesus Christ, risen from the dead." Toth was subdued by bystanders after he had broken Mary's arm, nose and eyelid. The *Pietà* was restored and is now kept behind a reinforced glass screen.

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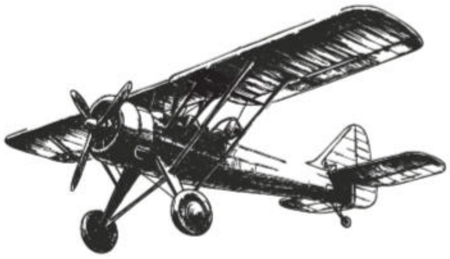
ALL ABOUT
FLIGHT



From kites to Concorde, we break down the innovations and challenges that made air travel possible

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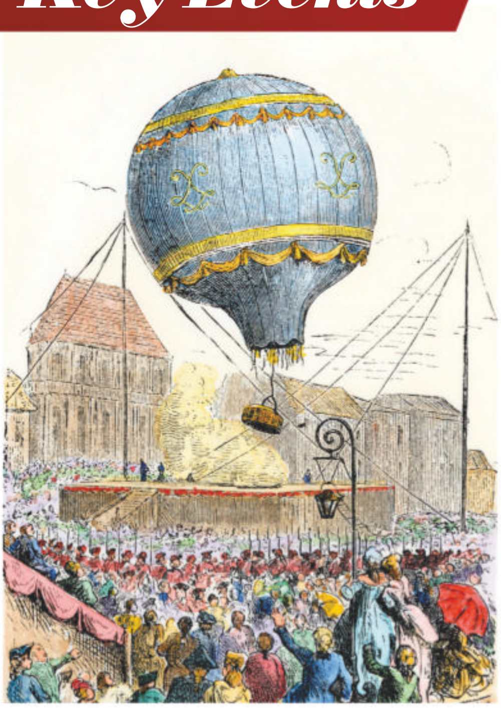
Main image: © Getty Images

Written by Emily Staniforth, Callum McKelvie, Jonathan Gordon

Key Events



1783 FIRST SUCCESSFUL HOT AIR BALLOON FLIGHT

The Montgolfier brothers test their hot air balloon in front of a large crowd in Annonay, France, with a crew of three. The balloon rises to a height of 1,585m to 2,000m and travels about 1.5km.

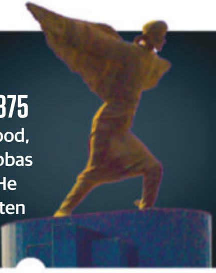
1903 WRIGHT BROTHERS FLIGHT

Wilbur and Orville Wright successfully launch the first sustained flight by a powered aircraft, with the Wright Flyer. The flight, which takes place near Kitty Hawk in North Carolina, is the result of four years of research and development.

The Wright brothers' interest in flight began at a young age when their father brought them a toy helicopter.

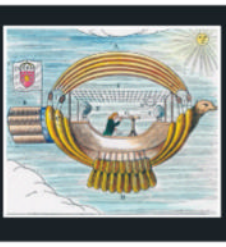
ABBAS IBN FIRNAS ATTEMPTS TO FLY C.875

Constructing wings out of wood, silk and feathers, the poet Abbas Ibn Firnas attempts a flight. He successfully glides for about ten minutes before crashing.



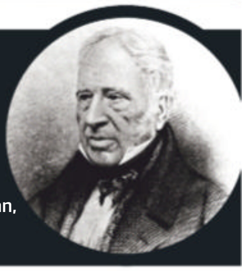
FLYING MACHINES OF BARTOLOMEU LOURENCO DE GUSMAO 1709

Bartolomeu Lourenco de Gusmao presents his design for a flying machine to King John V of Portugal. De Gusmao goes on to design another flying machine (right).

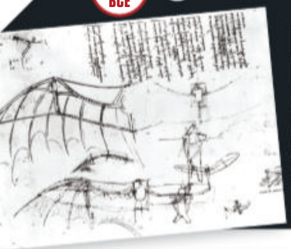


SIR GEORGE CAYLEY GLIDER FLIGHT 1853

After nearly 50 years of development, Sir George Cayley carries out the first manned glider flight. George Appleby, his coachman, is the nervous passenger.

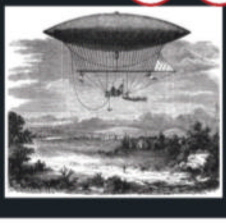


c.475 BCE 1783 1785 1903



LEONARDO DA VINCI DESIGNS ORNITHOPTER C.1486

Leonardo da Vinci designs his first flying machine, with wings that the user 'flaps' like a bird. The artist is obsessed with flight and designs numerous models throughout his life.



CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST AIRSHIP 1852

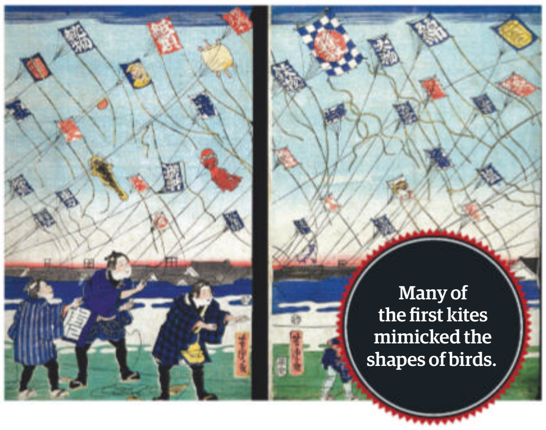
Henri Giffard builds the world's first successful example of an airship. It can fly at a speed of nearly 10kmph.

FIRST SCHEDULED PASSENGER FLIGHT 1914

The world's first regularly scheduled commercial passenger airline opens. Piloted by Tony Jannus, it flies from St Petersburg, Florida, to Tampa.

c.475 BCE INVENTION OF THE KITE

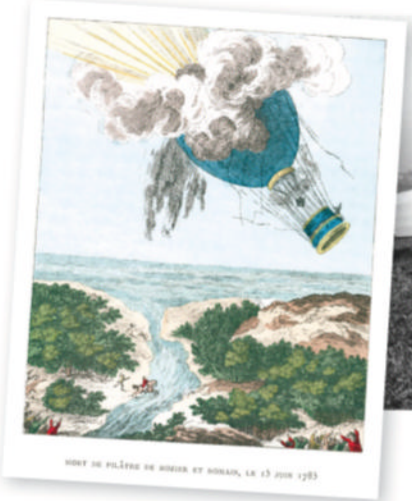
The kite is thought to have been invented in China, most likely using materials such as paper, silk and bamboo. These kites have practical purposes such as measuring distances or assisting communication between armies.

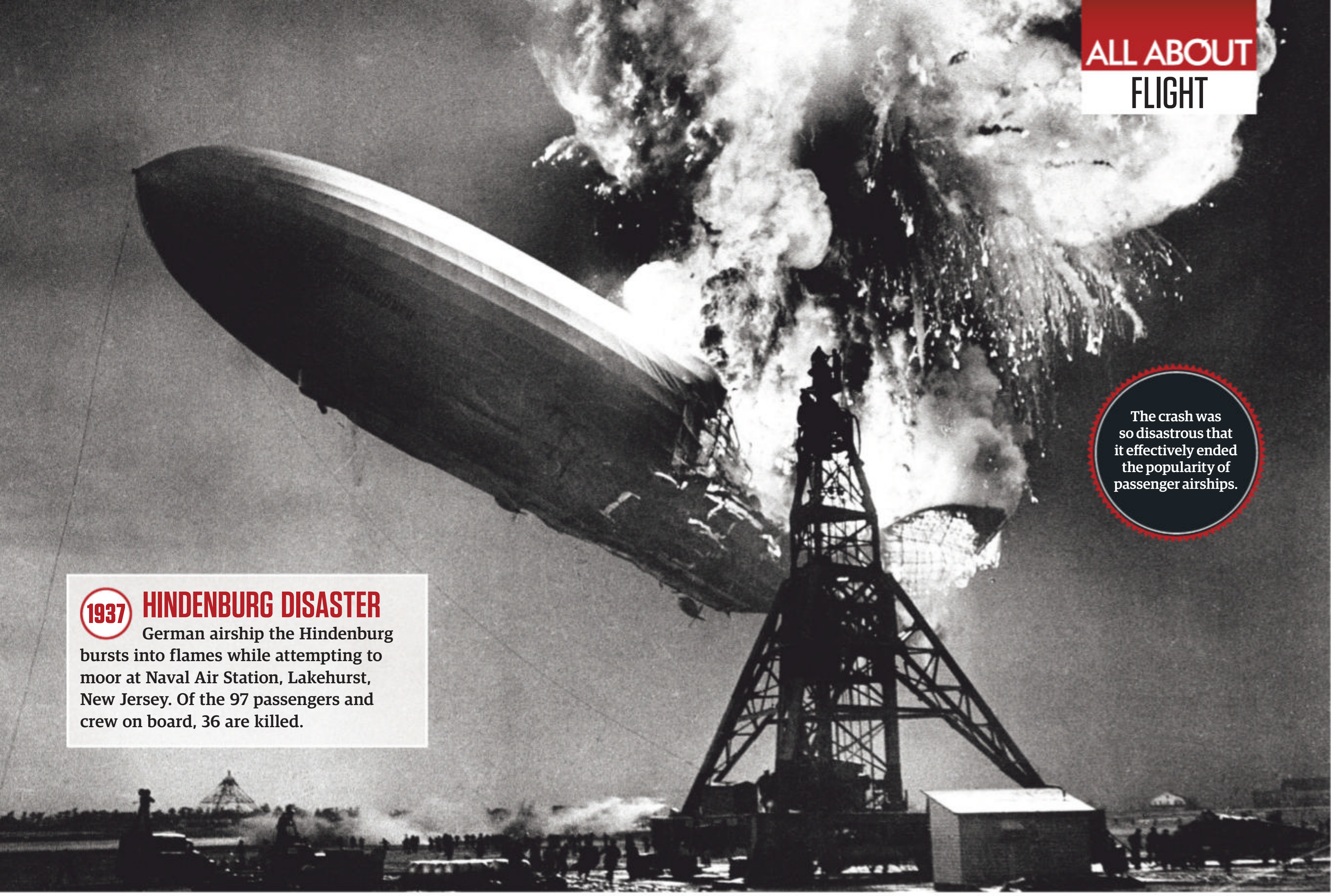


Many of the first kites mimicked the shapes of birds.

1785 FIRST EVER AIR DISASTER

Balloonist Jean Francois Pilatre de-Rozier attempts to cross the English Channel in a hot air balloon with Pierre Romain. But the balloon catches fire over Pas-de-Calais and both men are killed. They are the first recorded fatalities of an air crash.





The crash was so disastrous that it effectively ended the popularity of passenger airships.

1937 HINDENBURG DISASTER

German airship the Hindenburg bursts into flames while attempting to moor at Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey. Of the 97 passengers and crew on board, 36 are killed.

FIRST SOLO FLIGHT AROUND THE WORLD 1933

Wiley Post completes the first solo flight around the world in seven days, 18 hours and 49 minutes. The flight utilises innovative technology such as the autopilot.

FIRST MASS-PRODUCED HELICOPTER 1943

Following Henrich Focke's invention of the world's first practical helicopter in 1936, the Sikorsky R-4B becomes the first mass-produced helicopter and the first utilised by the United States Air Force.

FIRST AROUND THE WORLD BALLOON FLIGHT 1999

The Breitling Orbiter Three, piloted by Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones, flies around the world in 19 days, 21 hours and 55 minutes, covering a total distance of 40,814km.

1927 1937 1969

INVENTION OF THE JET ENGINE 1939

Ernst Heinkel develops the world's first jet-powered aircraft, the Heinkel He-178. The German Air Ministry is initially uninterested because it's developing its own jet aircraft.

SOUND BARRIER BROKEN 1947

Colonel Charles 'Chuck' Yeager becomes the first person to break the sound barrier. He flies a Bell X-1 jet, designated Glamorous Glennis, to speeds of up to 1,125kp/h.

LAST FLIGHT OF THE CONCORDE 2003

Financial losses in the aftermath of 9/11, increased running costs and a fatal crash three years earlier lead to the supersonic passenger jet being taken out of service.

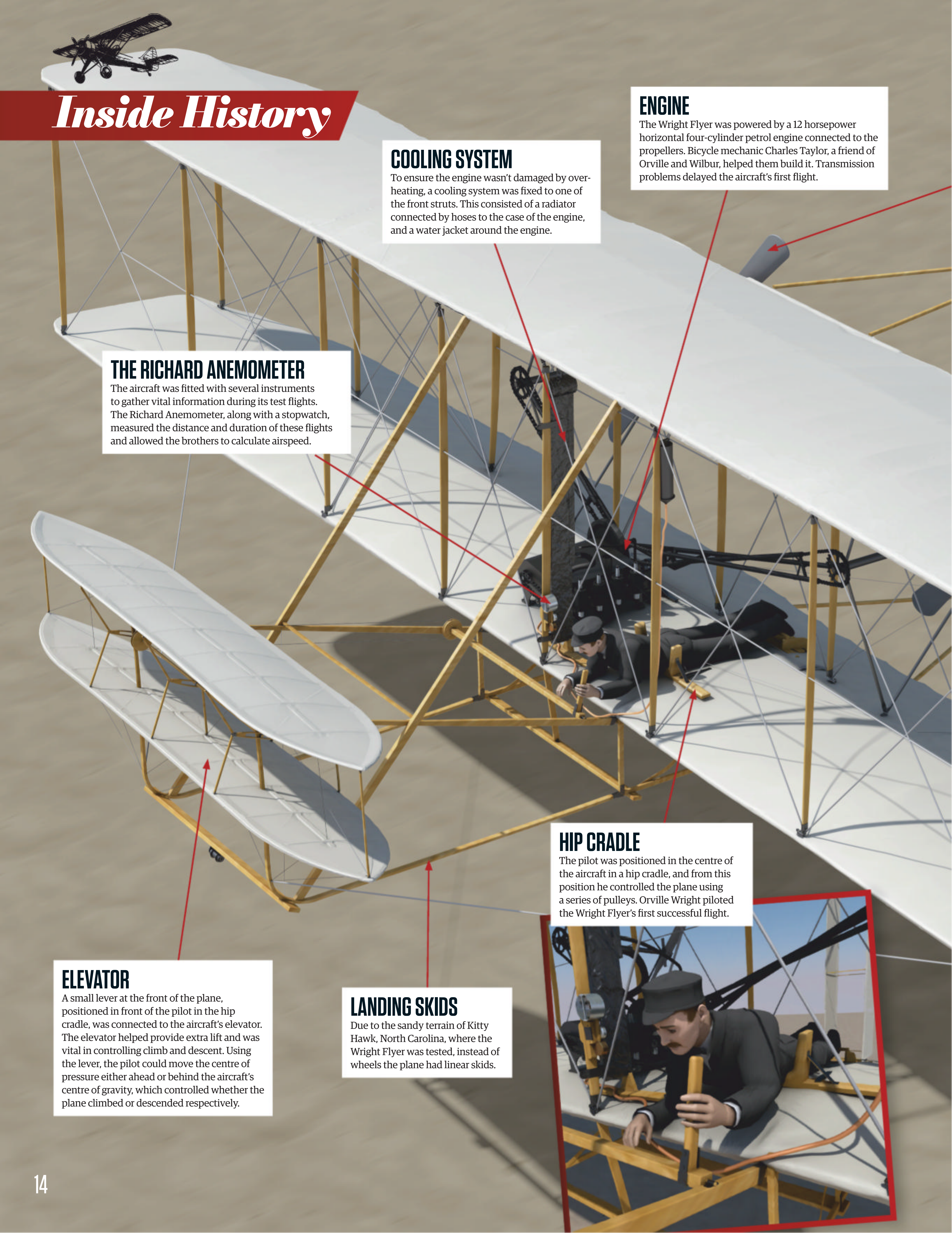
1927 SPIRIT OF ST LOUIS

American aviator Charles Lindbergh undertakes the first non-stop solo transatlantic flight in his plane Spirit of St Louis. The flight takes him 33 hours and 30 minutes to complete, landing in an airfield at Aéroport Le Bourget in Paris.

1969 FLIGHT OF THE CONCORDE

Concorde undertakes its first flight, from Toulouse, France. Constructed by British and French manufacturers, it's the world's first supersonic passenger aircraft and can to fly from London to New York in around 3.5 hours. From 1976 it operates a commercial service.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images



COOLING SYSTEM

To ensure the engine wasn't damaged by overheating, a cooling system was fixed to one of the front struts. This consisted of a radiator connected by hoses to the case of the engine, and a water jacket around the engine.

ENGINE

The Wright Flyer was powered by a 12 horsepower horizontal four-cylinder petrol engine connected to the propellers. Bicycle mechanic Charles Taylor, a friend of Orville and Wilbur, helped them build it. Transmission problems delayed the aircraft's first flight.

THE RICHARD ANEMOMETER

The aircraft was fitted with several instruments to gather vital information during its test flights. The Richard Anemometer, along with a stopwatch, measured the distance and duration of these flights and allowed the brothers to calculate airspeed.

HIP CRADLE

The pilot was positioned in the centre of the aircraft in a hip cradle, and from this position he controlled the plane using a series of pulleys. Orville Wright piloted the Wright Flyer's first successful flight.

ELEVATOR

A small lever at the front of the plane, positioned in front of the pilot in the hip cradle, was connected to the aircraft's elevator. The elevator helped provide extra lift and was vital in controlling climb and descent. Using the lever, the pilot could move the centre of pressure either ahead or behind the aircraft's centre of gravity, which controlled whether the plane climbed or descended respectively.

LANDING SKIDS

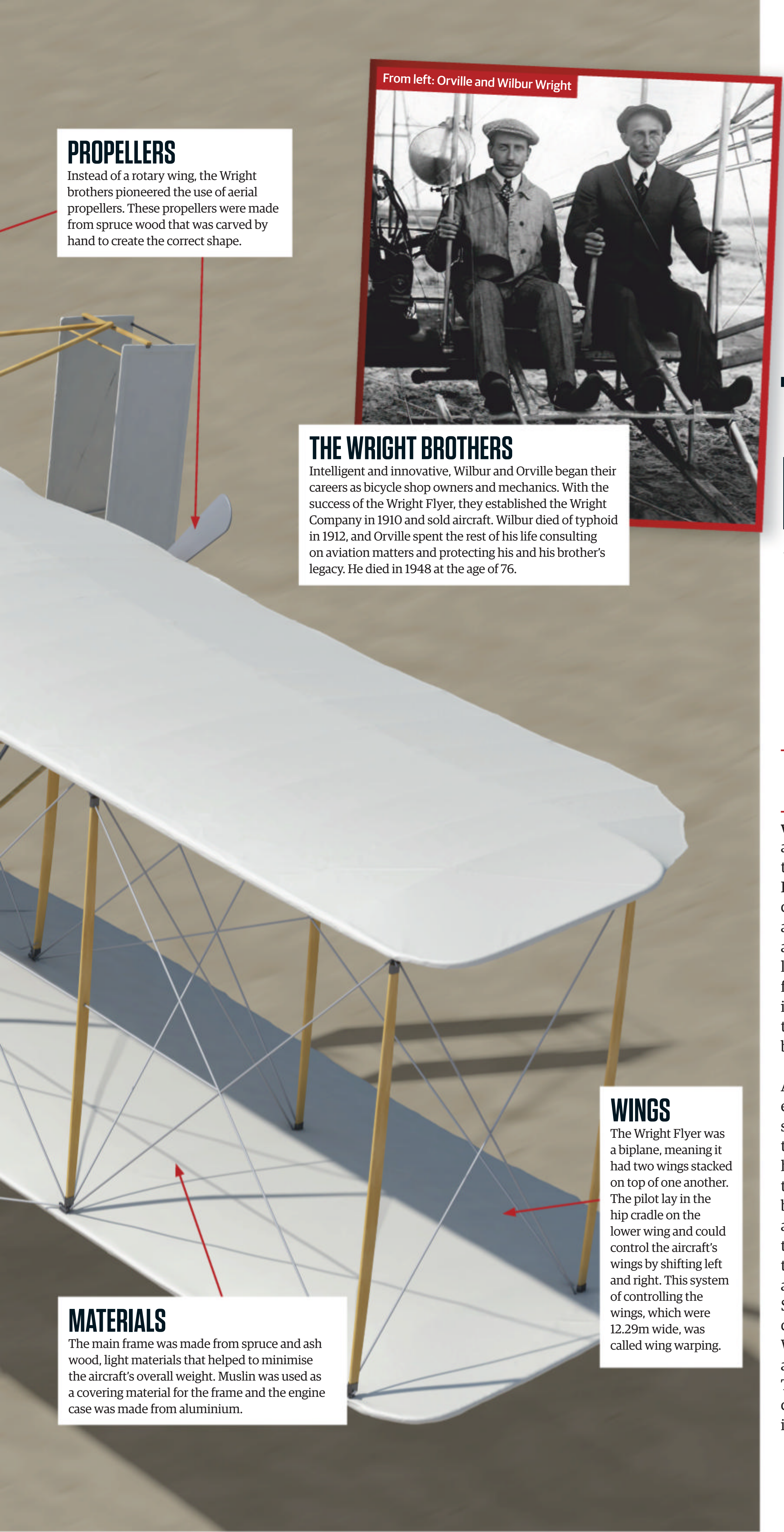
Due to the sandy terrain of Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, where the Wright Flyer was tested, instead of wheels the plane had linear skids.

THE WRIGHT FLYER

USA
1903

In man's quest to take to the skies, the Wright brothers were pioneers whose aerial inventions and innovations led the way for the powered aircraft of today. Wilbur and Orville Wright had been bicycle mechanics by trade before they turned their attention to aviation. Inspired by a toy helicopter they'd been given as children and news stories about Otto Lilienthal, a German glider inventor and pilot who died in a glider crash in 1896, they busied themselves learning all they could about aviation design. Their first experiment with a biplane kite took place in 1899 and saw them test their 'wing warping' theory. When the experiment was successful, the brothers started to design their first plane.

Four years later, the Wright Flyer was ready. A 6.43m biplane, it was constructed after they had experimented with three gliders at their testing site in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, a small village that experienced perfect windy conditions and had dunes for soft landings. On 17 December 1903, the brothers' hard work was put to the test. Piloted by Orville, the Wright Flyer successfully took off at Kitty Hawk and was in the air for 12 seconds, travelling 36m. This was the first time a heavier-than-air powered plane had successfully flown, and marked the beginning of the age of aviation. Subsequent tests of the Wright Flyer on the same day saw it airborne for as long as 59 seconds. The Wright brothers went on to perfect the design and stunned the world with their achievement. The original 1903 Wright Flyer is now part of the collection at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC.



From left: Orville and Wilbur Wright

PROPELLERS

Instead of a rotary wing, the Wright brothers pioneered the use of aerial propellers. These propellers were made from spruce wood that was carved by hand to create the correct shape.

THE WRIGHT BROTHERS

Intelligent and innovative, Wilbur and Orville began their careers as bicycle shop owners and mechanics. With the success of the Wright Flyer, they established the Wright Company in 1910 and sold aircraft. Wilbur died of typhoid in 1912, and Orville spent the rest of his life consulting on aviation matters and protecting his and his brother's legacy. He died in 1948 at the age of 76.

WINGS

The Wright Flyer was a biplane, meaning it had two wings stacked on top of one another. The pilot lay in the hip cradle on the lower wing and could control the aircraft's wings by shifting left and right. This system of controlling the wings, which were 12.29m wide, was called wing warping.

MATERIALS

The main frame was made from spruce and ash wood, light materials that helped to minimise the aircraft's overall weight. Muslin was used as a covering material for the frame and the engine case was made from aluminium.

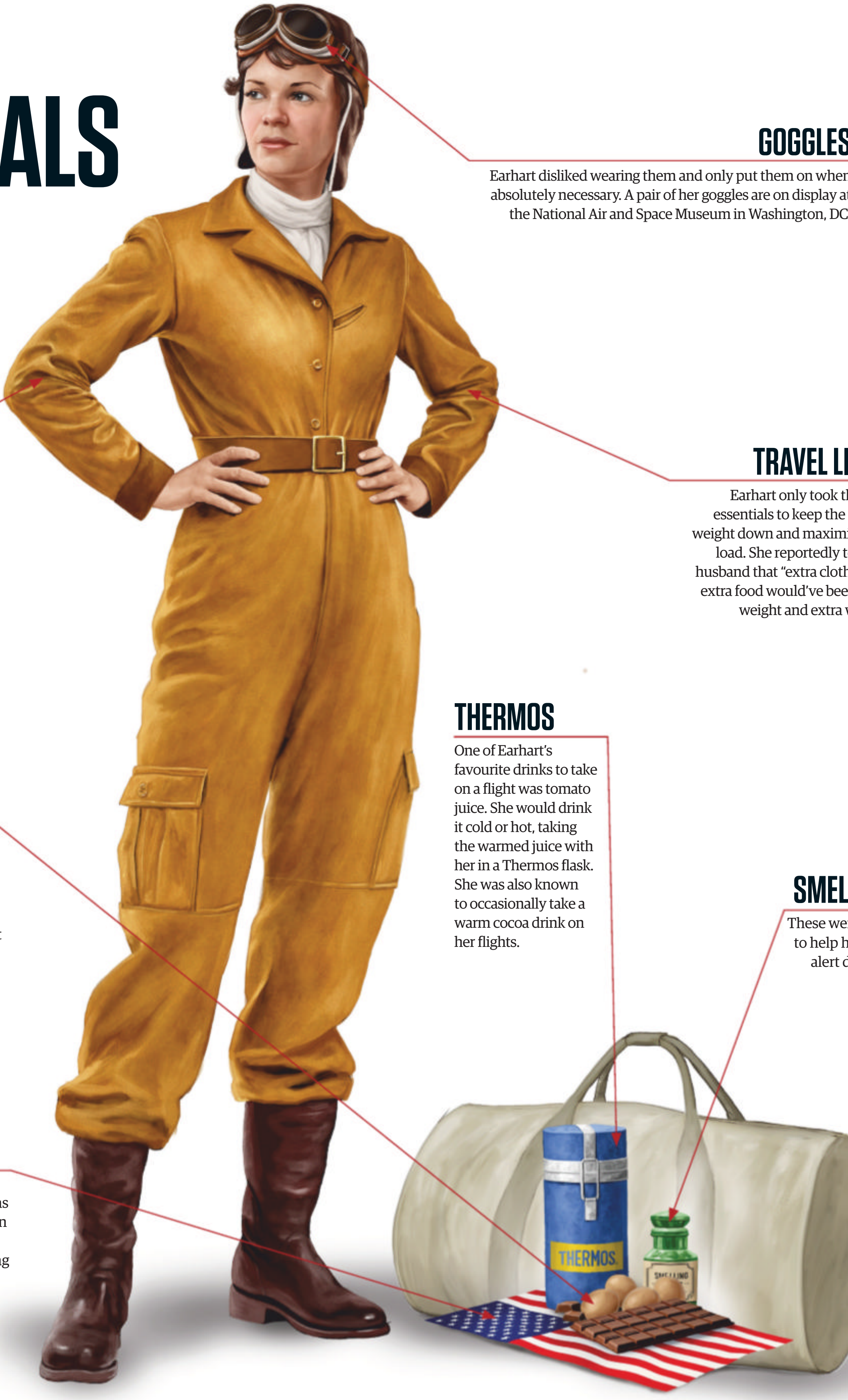
Illustration: Adrian Mann
Inset: © Alamy

Anatomy

AMELIA EARHART'S FLIGHT ESSENTIALS

USA

c.1920-37



GOGGLES

Earhart disliked wearing them and only put them on when absolutely necessary. A pair of her goggles are on display at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC.

FLIGHT SUIT

Earhart wore a flight suit made by Arnold Constable & Company on a number of her journeys. It was made from leather and lined with wool to help protect her from the elements.

TRAVEL LIGHT

Earhart only took the bare essentials to keep the plane's weight down and maximise fuel load. She reportedly told her husband that "extra clothes and extra food would've been extra weight and extra worry".

THERMOS

One of Earhart's favourite drinks to take on a flight was tomato juice. She would drink it cold or hot, taking the warmed juice with her in a Thermos flask. She was also known to occasionally take a warm cocoa drink on her flights.

EGGS AND CHOCOLATE

On her long-distance trips Earhart took small nutritious snacks with her such as squares of chocolate, hard-boiled eggs and raisins. She said these snacks were enough to "prevent fatigue but not enough to induce drowsiness".

SMELLING SALTS

These were used by Earhart to help her stay awake and alert during long flights.

AMERICAN FLAG

She carried a small silk US flag with her on all her long-distance flights. However, it was not with her on her final flight in 1937 when Earhart, her navigator Fred Noonan and their plane disappeared. She'd given the flag to a friend, making a comment that hinted she was unlikely to return.

Illustration: Kevin McGivern

Historical Treasures

AERO CLUB LICENCE

How the first aviators got their wings

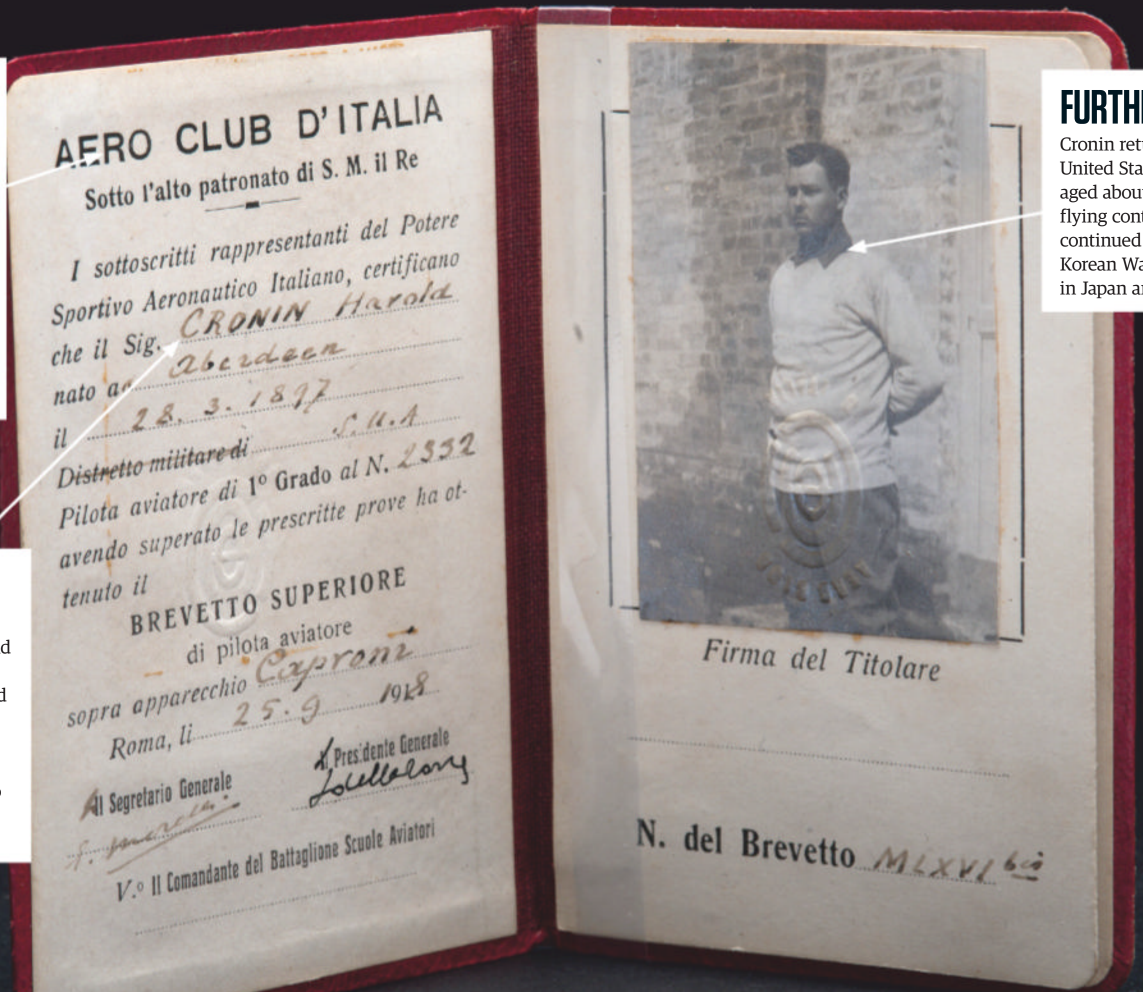
Italy, 1918

It wasn't long after the Wright brothers achieved their first powered flight in 1903 that others wanted to take to the sky as well and, like driving, training and licensing came into force. While comprehensive administrative apparatus took many years to come into being, aero clubs stepped in to fill the gap. It's believed that the first aero club, an organisation for hobbyists and enthusiasts, was started in 1898 with the Aero Club de France. This obviously predates the first powered aircraft, but they were also interested in the use of balloons and generally promoting innovation in aerial travel.

With the advent of aeroplanes, these civilian organisations stepped in to offer people training and the opportunity to fly for themselves. These organisations quickly built up expertise that would prove to be vital during the First World War as planes began to be used in combat and there was a desperate need for pilots. Being ahead of the game, these clubs were ideally placed to offer flight training and issue licences to get new pilots into the air as quickly as possible.

Initial flight courses would last for two or three weeks and started with training in the cockpit while still on the ground, followed by flying with an instructor and then solo flights. A more comprehensive course, lasting several months, was offered to army and navy pilots and focused on flying a specific aircraft and flying at high altitude. There was also a rigorous written exam as part of the training.

Meanwhile, education in the mechanics of flight was also just getting started. The German Institute for Experimental Aviation was set up in 1912 and the University of Michigan in the United States started its aeronautical engineering programme in 1914. The Royal Navy had its own training programme, called the Air Service Training Establishment, set up in 1916 (later broken off into the Royal Air Force after the First World War) but civilian groups were needed to train the large number of pilots that would be needed to conduct the war. The first federal pilot licence issued in the United States wasn't until 1927.



AERO CLUB D'ITALIA
Sotto l'alto patronato di S. M. il Re

I sottoscritti rappresentanti del Potere Sportivo Aeronautico Italiano, certificano
che il Sig. CRONIN Harold
nato a Aberdeen
il 28. 3. 1897
~~Distretto militare di~~ S.U.A
Pilota aviatore di 1° Grado al N. 2332
avendo superato le prescritte prove ha ottenuto il
BREVETTO SUPERIORE
di pilota aviatore
sopra apparecchio Caproni
Roma, li 25. 9 1918
Il Segretario Generale
Il Presidente Generale
V.° Il Comandante del Battaglione Scuole Aviatori

Firma del Titolare

N. del Brevetto MLXVI bis

ITALIAN HUB
At the start of the First World War Italy had about 80 aircraft and perhaps even fewer pilots. Between 1915 and 1918, an estimated 12,000 military planes were manufactured. Additionally 5,193 pilots were trained in Italy.

WAR PILOT
This is the aero club licence of George Harold Cronin from Aberdeen, Maryland, in the United States. He served in WWI and WWII, first enlisting in 1917. He went to Foggia, Italy, to earn this licence to fly Caproni CA-3 bombers.

FURTHER SERVICE
Cronin returned to duty when the United States entered WWII, now aged about 44, and served as a flying control officer in Europe. He continued to serve through to the Korean War, where he was stationed in Japan and Taiwan.

LATER LIFE
Cronin took up a role at Andrews Air Force Base with Military Air Transport Command until he retired from active duty in 1957 as a lieutenant colonel. He held a civilian position with the Pentagon's Civil Engineering Directorate until 1967. He died, aged 100, in 1998.

© Getty Images

AVIATION PIONEERS

Men and women who pushed the boundaries of flight technology and air travel

ALBERTO SANTOS-DUMONT

BRAZILIAN, 1873 – 1932

Alberto Santos-Dumont was the heir to a successful coffee business and used his wealth to fund his passion for aviation, studying engineering in France. He developed a number of designs for balloons and winged aircraft. His first balloon, called Brazil after his homeland, flew in 1898, and he then moved into dirigible design. After hearing about the Wright brothers' success he focussed on powered winged flight and conducted the first public demonstration in Europe in 1906, winning several prizes before returning to Brazil in 1928.

BESSIE COLEMAN

AMERICAN, 1892 – 1926

Inspired by stories of women flying planes in France during the First World War, Coleman attempted to earn a licence in America but was turned down by the schools she applied to. Undeterred, she sailed to France in 1920 and enrolled in a ten-month course, becoming the first American woman to earn an international pilot's licence. Returning to America, she started a career as a stunt pilot, travelling the US and returning to Europe for display shows.

Chuck Yeager

American, 1923 – 2020

Enlisted into the US Army in 1941, Charles Elwood 'Chuck' Yeager was fresh out of high school when he joined the Army Air Corps, flying 64 missions in Europe during WWII. Once the war was over he worked as a test pilot and instructor. From 1947 he was selected as a test pilot for the Bell Aircraft Company, helping develop supersonic aircraft. He became the first man to break the sound barrier, in the X-1 on 14 October 1947, reaching 1,066kmph. He set a record of 2,660kmph in the X-1A in 1953.

During his career Yeager flew over 10,000 hours as a pilot in more than 361 different types of aircraft.

AMELIA EARHART

AMERICAN, 1897 – 1937

Earhart was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean, in 1928. Coming from a wealthy family, she'd started her flying career in 1920 and bought her first plane in 1921. Her 1928 flight, lasting 20 hours between Newfoundland and Wales, made her a household name. She followed it by setting an altitude record of over 5,600m in 1931 and flying from Hawaii to California solo in 1935. In 1937 she and her navigator Fred Noonan disappeared somewhere over the Pacific Ocean during an attempted flight around the world.

GEORGE CAYLEY

BRITISH, 1773 – 1854

Nearly 100 years before the Wright brothers, George Cayley recorded the first successful glider flight using a model. It would take him nearly 50 more years to complete the first manned glider flight, with his coachman as the pilot. Cayley's work in aeronautics design and aerodynamics made his research vital to much of the success in winged flight that followed in the early 20th century, including wing design, rudders and streamlining.

ELLEN CHURCH

AMERICAN, 1904-65

Ellen Church trained as a nurse, earning her degree in 1926 before taking up a position in San Francisco and beginning flying lessons. Air travel became her great passion, but she was unable to secure a job as a pilot. Instead, with commercial flights in their infancy, Church proposed a new role: having trained nurses as part of the flight crew to reassure passengers. Her pitch to Boeing Air Transport (later United Airlines) led to her becoming the first flight attendant, in 1930.

Bromwell won a prize to get her first flight experience, selling $21,000 of war bonds in 1918. The last $1,000 she bought herself to make sure she won.

Laura Bromwell

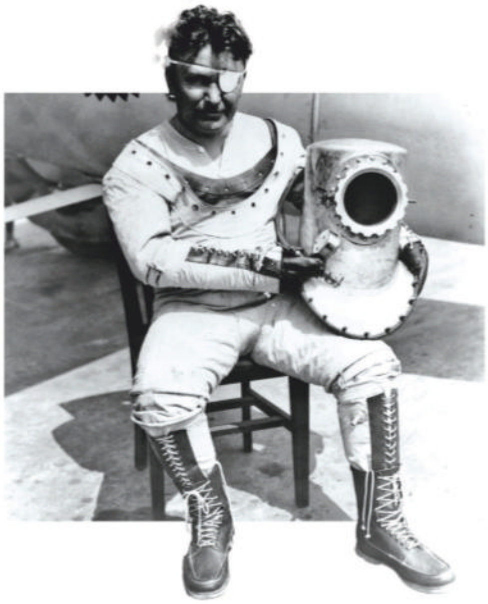
American, 1897 – 1921

It would be fair to say that Laura Bromwell had a reputation for being daredevil long before she entered the cockpit of a plane, jumping into the Ohio River from a suspension bridge for a $20 bet being a famous example. She earned her pilot's licence aged 22 and signed up with the New York Police Department's new Aviation Division, which used surplus military planes. She officially completed 87 loops in the air in 1920, breaking the female record by 62. She then did 199 loops in 1921 and broke the women's aviation speed record. She died in a crash on 5 June 1921.

WILEY POST

AMERICAN, 1898 – 1935

Jules Verne proposed a journey around the world in 80 days in his famous novel, but in 1933 Wiley Post did it in just seven days, 18 hours and 49 minutes in the first solo flight around the globe. Flying his plane the Winnie Mae, he travelled 25,099km making use of autopilot and radio direction finding, two new technologies for the time. Post went on to push the boundaries of altitude in flight, testing early pressure suits for such flights.



WRIGHT BROTHERS

AMERICAN, WILBUR: 1867-1912/ORVILLE: 1871-1948

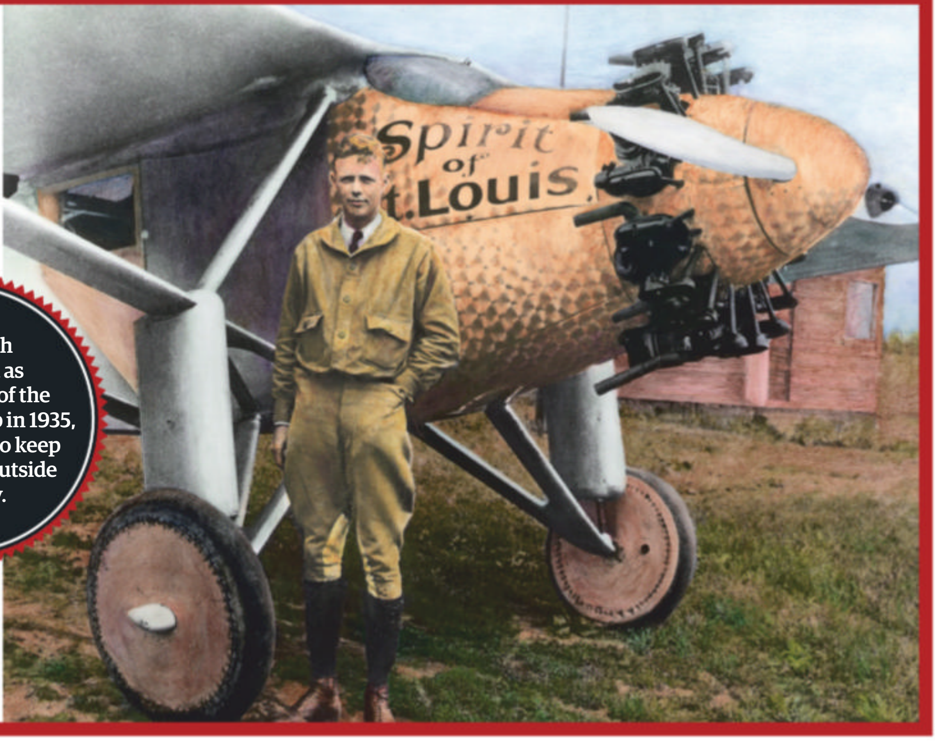
Wilbur and Orville Wright are renowned as the first people to achieve powered, sustained flight with an aircraft, in 1903. They started out in the printing business, publishing local newspapers, before opening a bicycle shop in 1892. From 1899 they experimented with gliders and powered flight, their key innovation being adding controls for a pilot. Their work led to the development of the Wright Flyer in 1903, which flew for 59 seconds. By 1905 they had an aircraft in the air for 39 minutes, and by 1908 were conducting demonstrations in France. They also started trials with the US Army for military planes.

Charles Lindbergh

American, 1902-74

In May 1927 Charles Lindbergh became the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Leaving from New York aboard his plane the Spirit of St Louis on 20 May 1927, he landed at Le Bourguet near Paris after flying for 33.5 hours and was greeted by a crowd of over 100,000 people. This brought Lindbergh tremendous fame, but also tragedy and notoriety. In 1932 his infant son Charles Lindbergh Jr was kidnapped and held for ransom, only to be killed. A few years later, Lindbergh became close with the Nazi regime in Germany and was opposed to America joining the Second World War, although he did assist the war effort following Pearl Harbor.

Lindbergh is credited as the designer of the perfusion pump in 1935, a device used to keep organs alive outside the body.



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WHAT IS AVIATION ARCHAEOLOGY?

Dr Lisa M Daly tells us about her research in Canada and what we can discover from historic crash sites

Headshot: © Shannon K Green

LEFT
Mabel Boll was an American socialite involved in attempts to cross the Atlantic in the 1920s

What is aviation archaeology?
Aviation archaeology entails researching, documenting and investigating the material culture remains of aircraft on the landscape. Much of the work being done around the world by other archaeologists is underwater but my work tends to be terrestrial – I end up in a lot of bogs and forests. Aircraft crashes can differ significantly, with high-energy impacts scattering debris over large areas, to controlled landings where the aircraft is virtually intact. They can also be impacted by the environment and preservation levels of the wreckage, and by recovery efforts soon after the incident or years later. Each of these aircraft have a story to tell about the flights, the crews and the aftermath of the crash.

What first attracted you to the field of aviation archaeology?
After university I applied to a couple of archaeology jobs through Memorial University. The one I wanted was a survey of the wreckage of a USAAF B-24 bomber that crashed on 14 February 1945 near Gander, Newfoundland, and Labrador. The survey was interesting, but I applied because there were three servicemen from the flight listed as Missing In Action. They were never positively identified after the crash. We did find some human remains, and what really captured my interest was the day we found a house key and some jacket buttons. We opened excavation units and found many personal effects. The most powerful was the navigator's silver wings and our site historian had a picture of the navigator, wearing silver wings. Later, the pilot's son, William Dolan Jr, came to Gander to get answers about his father's death. At the end of his visit, he thanked us and said: "I finally have closure. I only wish my mother and sister were still alive to know this." It made me want to research more sites like this to hopefully help others find answers about their family members.

Dr Lisa M Daly is an aviation archaeologist and expert in Newfoundland's and Labrador's aviation history. Her research interests include Second World War and military aviation, the first transatlantic attempts and early female aviators.

How significant is the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador in aviation history?
Newfoundland, the island portion of the province, sticks out into the Atlantic Ocean. For that reason, we have seen many firsts when it comes to flight. In 1919, [John] Alcock and [Arthur] Brown took off from St John's and landed in Clifden, Ireland, on the first non-stop transatlantic flight. In 1935, what is now Gander was selected to be the location of an airport. When World War II broke out, Gander was completed and became a transatlantic hub for aircraft delivery from Canada and the US to Europe. Thousands of aircraft flew through Gander. Other airports, like Goose Bay in Labrador, were built for the shorter-range aircraft to hop from Labrador to Greenland to Iceland. These airports – Gander, Argentia, Torbay and Stephenville in Newfoundland and Goose Bay in Labrador – became important for delivering aircraft and supplies to the war effort and

for escorting convoys and hunting U-Boats. After the war, Newfoundland and Labrador continued to be a hub for commercial flights, with Gander earning the name 'The Crossroads of the World' as many aircraft had to stop there to refuel.

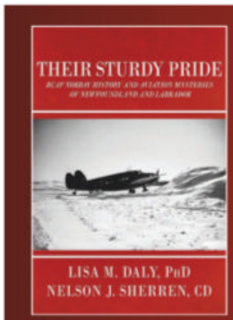
What are some of the earliest crash sites you've been able to work on as an aviation archaeologist?

The earliest confirmed site I have worked on is RCAF Douglas Digby 742, which had been on a patrol mission on 25 July 1941 when it was called back to Gander. The weather was closing in and the aircraft had trouble finding the runway. On the final attempt to land, it crashed on a bog near the airport, killing all on board. They weren't the first fatalities out of Gander, and the authorities knew more fatalities were inevitable, so they established a Commonwealth War Graves in Gander.

The earliest site I have worked on was looking for the Oiseau Blanc or The Dawn at Gull Pond on the Cape Shore of Newfoundland. The Oiseau Blanc went missing in May 1927 trying to fly from Paris to New York to win the Orteig Prize, later won by Charles Lindbergh. The Dawn went missing leaving New York for Harbour Grace [in Newfoundland] in December 1927 with Frances Grayson, who was trying to be the first woman to cross the Atlantic by plane. Starting in the 1930s, there had been stories about metal being recovered from the pond, so researchers have wondered if the Oiseau Blanc may have crashed in the area. A friend of mine, Nelson Sherren, theorised that because some of the metal was blue it may have been The Dawn, which was painted blue. While some metal pieces were recovered from the pond in 1992 and when I was there in 2021, there was nothing conclusive found that would indicate an aircraft crashed in that pond.

Can you tell us about some of the most intriguing aviation history you have come across in your line of work?

In recent years, I have been researching some of the women involved in early transatlantic aviation. Of course there is Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly across the Atlantic, in 1928, and then to do it solo in 1932. But working with the Conception Bay Museum in Harbour Grace, and through the research of Nelson Sherren, I learned about some of the other women who were trying to fly the Atlantic in 1927 and 1928. I have done some research into Mabel Boll, who was in Harbour Grace when Earhart was in Trepassey. Both women were waiting for a break in the weather, Earhart with the Friendship and Boll with Canadian aviator Erroll Boyd and the Columbia. My current project is learning more about Earhart and Boll's time in Newfoundland, but I'm also researching the other women, such as Frances Grayson, Ruth Elder and Elsie Mackay. All of these women, except Boll, were pilots and I hope to discover more about their stories.



THEIR STURDY PRIDE

RCAF TORBAY HISTORY AND AVIATION MYSTERIES OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

LISA M. DALY, PhD

NELSON J. SHERREN, CD

THEIR STURDY PRIDE: RCAF TORBAY HISTORY AND AVIATION MYSTERIES OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR **(ENGEN BOOKS, 2024) BY LISA M DALY AND NELSON J SHERREN IS AVAILABLE TO BUY NOW.**

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TOP
The Oiseau Blanc disappeared while attempting to fly from Paris to New York in 1927

RIGHT
The biplane flown by Alcock and Brown from Newfoundland to Ireland in 1919 landed in an Irish bog

> "Each crash site tells a story about the flight, the crew and the aftermath"

Places to Explore

AVIATION MUSEUMS

From Zeppelins to biplanes, visit these five museums that explore the history of flight

① BROOKLANDS MUSEUM

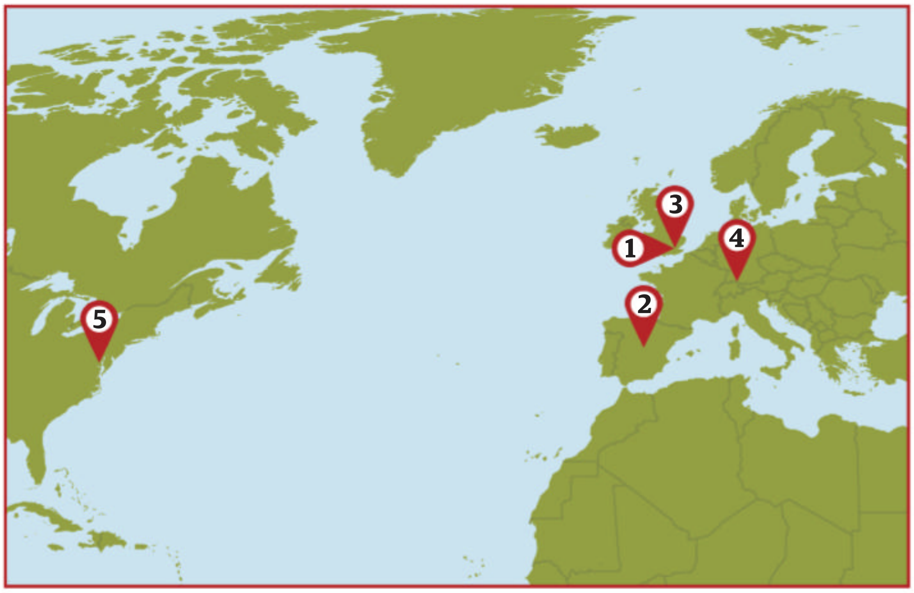
WEYBRIDGE, UK

First opening in 1907, Brooklands was a famous British motor racing circuit. The site soon expanded to include an aerodrome and later an aircraft factory. During the First World War it became the largest producer of aircraft in Britain and is now considered the birthplace of the British aviation industry. Now, while the racecourse and factory have long since been abandoned, a museum is based on the site. Visitors can enjoy the 'factory experience', which recreates the environment of the factory floor. The highlight of the Brooklands Museum is undoubtedly the Concorde: the museum operates the 'Concorde Experience', where for an additional fee visitors are provided with a boarding pass and can experience a 'virtual' flight inside a real Concorde. Due to Brooklands history with motor racing, there are also numerous exhibits devoted to the automobile industry, and the museum is split between aviation and automobiles.

The Brooklands Museum is open seven days a week from 10am to 5pm. Entry prices vary.

The entrance to Brooklands, with a large model of Concorde

An RAF Harrier jet inside Brooklands Museum



② MUSEUM OF AERONAUTICS AND ASTRONAUTICS

MADRID, SPAIN

Established in 1966, the Museum of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Madrid celebrates the history of Spanish air and space exploration. The museum encompasses seven hangers full of exhibits and artefacts telling the story of the Spanish Air Force.

There are also a number of aircraft relating to the Spanish Civil War, including an example of the dual biplane the de Havilland Dragon Rapide, one of which was used to fly Francisco Franco to Tetuán, the capital of Spanish Morocco, on 19 July 19 1936. Once there he assumed command of the armies located there and began the conflict.

Located at the Cuatro Vientos air base, the museum is operated by the Ministry of Defence. This spacious location allows the museum to have a number of exterior exhibits, including a variety of aircraft. These include a Heinkel He 111, used by the Luftwaffe during the Second World War, and an American Northrop F-5, which was in service during the Cold War.

The museum is open 10am to 2pm, Tuesday to Sunday. Entry is free.

The Museum of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Madrid is packed with aviation history

A CASA C-101 Aviojet from the Spanish Air Force in the museum

Learn about British military aviation at the RAF Museum

3

ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM

LONDON, UK

Located at Colindale in London, the Royal Air Force Museum explores the history of the titular institution. The RAF was founded in 1918 out of the Royal Flying Corps, which had proved its importance during the First World War. The RAF's first missions were a series of strategic bombing operations in France and Germany.

One of the main exhibitions at the RAF Museum explores the first 100 years of the organisation. Among the various treasures are Squadron Leader Arthur Scarf's Victoria Cross, an exhibition focussing on the RAF following the end of the Cold War and a variety of aircraft, including a WWI-era Sopwith F1 Camel. The museum doesn't just focus on aircraft - it also has a small collection of naval craft and an impressive art collection.

The Royal Air Force Museum also has a sister site located at RAF Cosford in the Midlands. Both museums have special exhibitions targeted towards families, with interactive exhibits and hands-on activities such as a flight simulator and 4D theatre. Among these, the London site offers visitors the opportunity to sit in the cockpit of a Spitfire for an additional cost - though be aware the museum specifies this is not suitable for children under the age of eight. Both museums also run a range of special events - check on their website for further details of these.

The Royal Air Force Museum London site is open 10am to 5pm, but the closing time for various attractions varies so check online before travelling. Entry is free.

A Zeppelin engine on display at the Friedrichshafen Museum

4

ZEPPELIN MUSEUM

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY

Friedrichshafen in Germany is the location of Lake Constance, where the first Zeppelin airship made its maiden flight, on 2 July 1900. Three years later the Wright brothers aircraft took off in North Carolina and in the years to come airships would be replaced as the primary form of flight. In 1996, the Zeppelin Museum opened to celebrate the aircraft's rich history and explore the legacy of this early form of flight.

Among the highlights that can be found among the museum's collection are a 33m replica of the Hindenburg airship and a full-size engine compartment. The replica of the Hindenburg allows visitors to fully investigate various areas of the ship, including the passenger compartments. There is also a Zeppelin 'cabinet of curiosities' and an impressive collection of art. The museum is located in what was the Harbour Railway Station, a perfect example of Bauhaus architecture.

The museum is open from Tuesday to Sunday, from 10am to 5pm. The average adult ticket (17+) costs €14.50

5

THE SMITHSONIAN NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

WASHINGTON DC, UNITED STATES

First opening in 1976, the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum contains thousands of artefacts from aviation and space exploration. The museum had a unique opening ceremony, with a signal sent from NASA's Viking 1 spacecraft triggering a robotic arm that then cut the ribbon on cue.

One of the highlights of any visit to the museum is the Boeing Milestones of Flight Gallery. Here can be found a collection of some of the world's most important aircraft and spacecraft, displayed hanging from the ceiling and walls. Among the artefacts on display are the Bell X-1 jet in which Chuck Yeager became the first man to break the sound barrier, and aviation pioneer Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St Louis.

As with some of the other museums featured here, the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum also has a second site. The Steven F Udvar-Hazy Centre can be found in Chantilly, Virginia. Taking both sites into account the museum is extremely popular, and according to its own site welcomes eight million visitors each year, making it the most-visited museum in the United States.

The museum is currently undergoing renovations, which began in 2018. Some of the galleries are due to reopen in spring 2025 but others will remain closed until 2026. Check online before travelling.

The museum is open 10am to 5.30pm, seven days a week. Entry is free but tickets must be booked for a specific time.

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A variety of the aircraft on display in the Washington museum.

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INDIA'S IRON LADY
The rise and fall of Indira Gandhi
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What if the princes in the tower had survived?
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The dark side of the WWII homefront
THE GREAT SURVIVOR
ANNE OF CLEVES
HOW SHE TURNED REJECTION INTO LIFELONG FORTUNE, FAVOUR AND INDEPENDENCE
HIDDEN SECRETS IN ART
WHAT IF NIXON HAD BEATEN KENNEDY
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EL CID
How a Castilian knight fought Christians and Muslims alike to become a national icon
80s BRITAIN IN PICTURES
LADY GODIVA
STARS BEHIND BARS
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COLD WAR GAY PANIC
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ROME'S MOST-HATED TYRANT?

NERO

Discover the real story behind one of the ancient world's most notorious emperors

Written by Dr Emma Southon

On 9 June 68 CE, Emperor Nero cowered in a villa outside Rome watching his companions build his pyre and prepared to take his own life. Observing them bustle about with wood and water, he wept and sighed: "What a great artist dies with me!" With Nero died not just an artist but also an emperor and his entire dynasty, and he left behind a reputation as the very worst of a bad bunch of rulers. He had all the hallmarks of a terrible emperor: he killed indiscriminately, he lived extravagantly, he was profligate with money and sex, and refused to engage in any proper Roman activities. But his worst crime, as far as the Romans were concerned, was to get on stage and sing. In this, he insulted their honour and their masculinity and made them pay homage to an actor. For this they could never forgive him.

Nero ascended to the Roman throne in October 54 CE aged 17. To get him there his mother, Agrippina, had married her uncle Claudius, persuaded him to disinherit his biological

Illustration by: Dan Strange

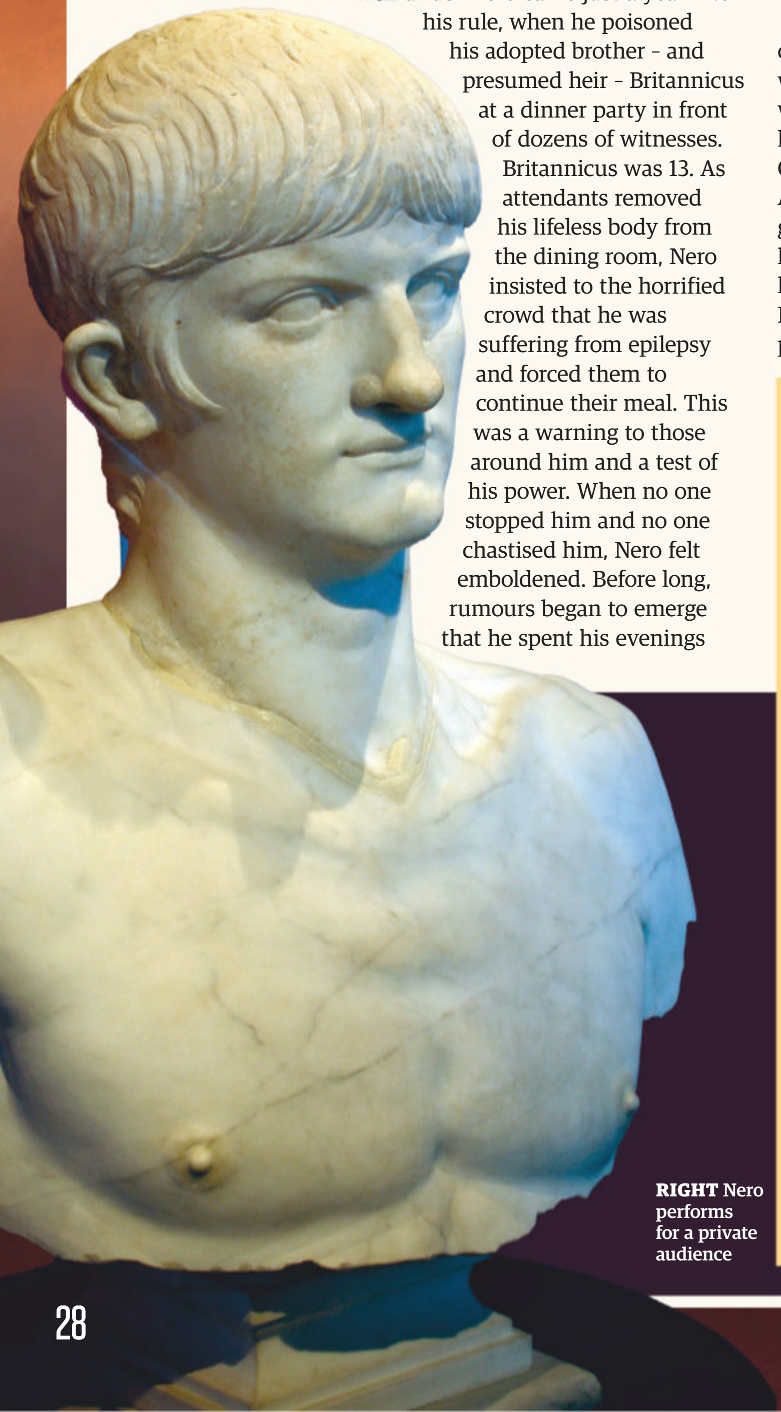
EXPERT BIO

© Jamie Drew

DR EMMA SOUTHON

Dr Emma Southon is a Roman historian with a PhD in Ancient History. Her most recent book is *A History of the Roman Empire in 21 Women*. She is the author of three other books on Roman history and the co-host of the history/comedy podcast *History Is Sexy*. Her next book is about slavery in the Roman empire and will be published in 2026.

FAR-RIGHT Agrippina the Younger, Nero's mother, murdered her husband to make Nero emperor



BELOW Nero was 17 when he became emperor, having been raised to believe he was born to rule the empire

son and adopt hers, taken control of his reign and then murdered him with a poisoned mushroom. As happened with every new emperor, the Senate and people of Rome received the change of regime from Claudius to Nero with great rejoicing, hoping as ever that this time they might get a good one. And Nero's early years were promising. Still effectively a child, he left the hard work of government to his grown-up advisors and focused himself on punishing his family for existing. Most of the first five years of Nero's reign were taken up with the announcement of very popular policies in public, like publishing taxes for the first time so people knew what they owed, punctuated with high drama in private.

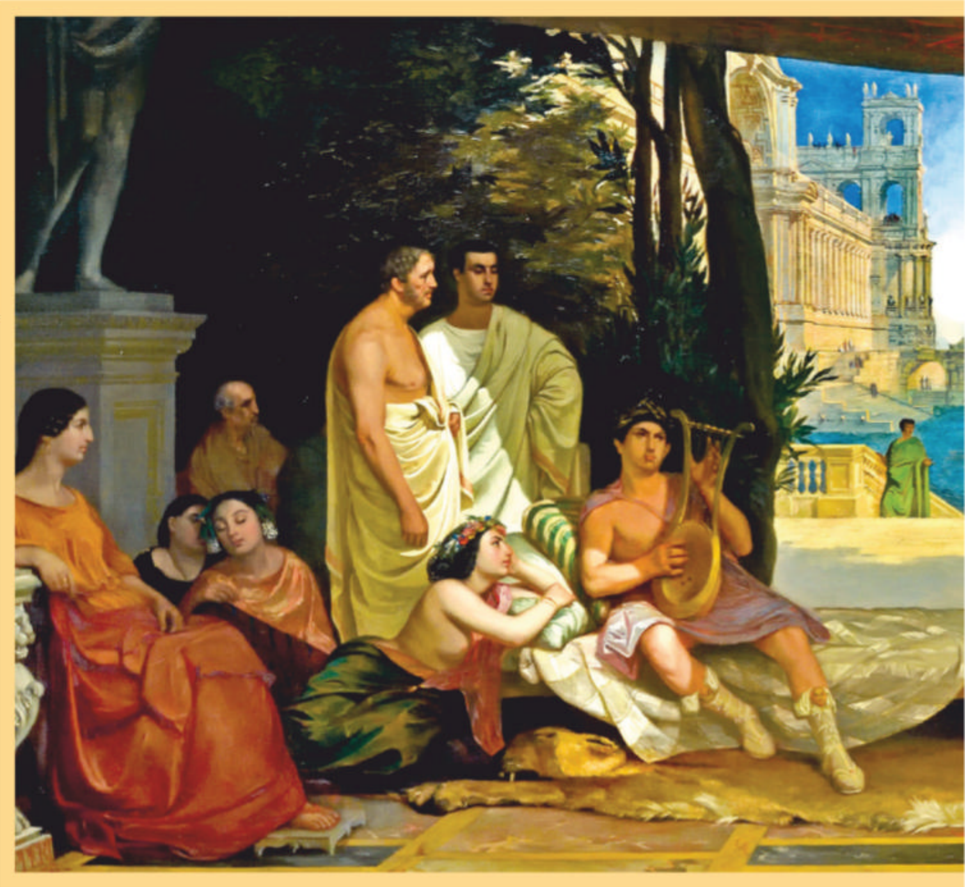
The first sign that all would not be well under Nero came just a year into his rule, when he poisoned his adopted brother – and presumed heir – Britannicus at a dinner party in front of dozens of witnesses. Britannicus was 13. As attendants removed his lifeless body from the dining room, Nero insisted to the horrified crowd that he was suffering from epilepsy and forced them to continue their meal. This was a warning to those around him and a test of his power. When no one stopped him and no one chastised him, Nero felt emboldened. Before long, rumours began to emerge that he spent his evenings in a strange and disturbing pastime: he donned a rough slave's tunic and went out on the town in Rome beating and assaulting men and women for fun and occasionally profit. Sometimes, it was said, he broke into shops and stole the contents, later selling them in the Forum.

These issues did not, however, effect the upper classes or the majority of the inhabitants of Rome and were generally considered to be mild peccadillos, along with his slightly embarrassing obsession with a freedwoman called Acte, whom he openly preferred to his legal wife, Octavia, and his regular fights with Agrippina. As long as he kept making good policies and not losing wars, and kept his behaviour relatively private, he could be tolerated. Unfortunately, Nero could not keep his behaviour private and could not handle the adoring sycophancy of everyone around him. He began to run a little wild in public.

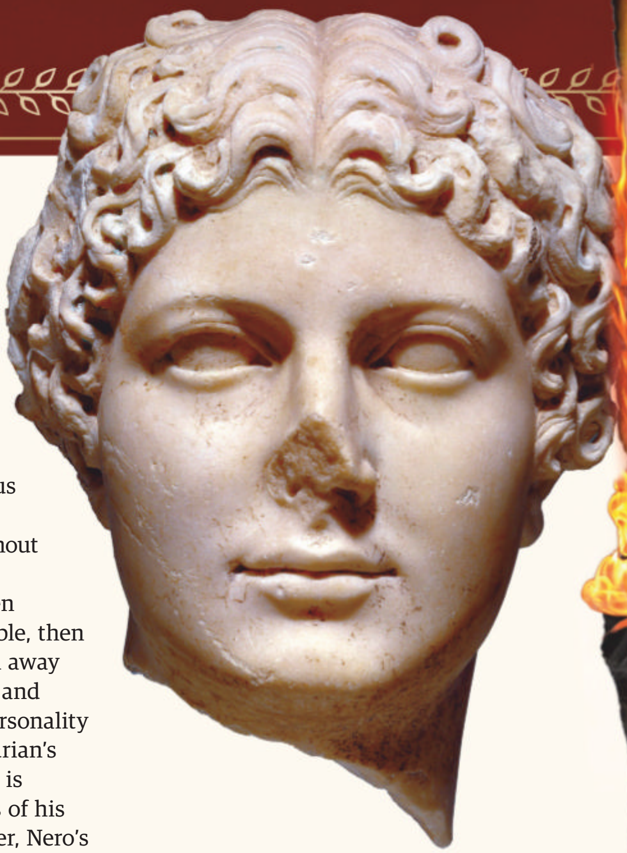
"NERO'S WORST CRIME, AS FAR AS THE ROMANS WERE CONCERNED, WAS TO GET ON STAGE AND SING"

In 59 CE, Nero committed the first great crime of his reign, one for which many people never forgave him: he murdered his own mother in cold blood. He was still just 21 when he killed her, driven by a desire to extricate himself from her influence over him and his armies. It took several attempts, because she was careful and clever, so Nero created more and more elaborate ruses to kill her in fake accidents, culminating in a theatrically collapsing boat that threw her into the Bay of Naples in the middle of the night. When she foiled this plan by swimming to safety, Nero had her stabbed to death and falsely accused her of trying to murder him and then killing herself.

No one believed him, but also no one criticised him to his face. His two closest advisors, who are generally remembered as good moral men who controlled Nero's worst impulses, both stood by and allowed him to commit matricide, and the Senate at Rome responded in public with obsequious thanksgiving for his survival while keeping their shock and disgust to themselves. In killing his mother, Nero violated one of the most sacred principles of Roman morality: that the child owes obedience to the parent. He lived with



RIGHT Nero performs for a private audience



guilt and shame about it for the rest of his life, and the murder of Agrippina was cited by everyone who plotted against him in the years to come as the moment when they began to hate him. But the public response by an obedient Senate celebrated his monstrous act and encouraged his belief that he could do anything without suffering any consequences.

Had Nero's personal life been virtuous, or even just reasonable, then he probably could have gotten away with his love of Greek theatre and carried it off as an unusual personality quirk, much like Emperor Hadrian's hellenophilia was forgiven. As is suggested by the two murders of his close family members, however, Nero's private life was neither virtuous nor reasonable. The stories about his sexual exploits and luxurious extravagance range from the astonishing to the unbelievable. In the bedroom, he was having sex with everyone except his wife Octavia. He had Acte as his main girlfriend and began an affair with his friend Otho's wife Poppea Sabina that became so serious he dispatched Otho to be governor of Luisitania (Portugal) so he could steal her. It was also widely believed that Nero had committed incest with his mother, although opinions vary on who instigated it. He also had a main boyfriend, Sporus, whom Nero had castrated before puberty, dressed in women's clothing and later married in a solemn wedding ceremony. In 61 CE, Nero falsified accusations of

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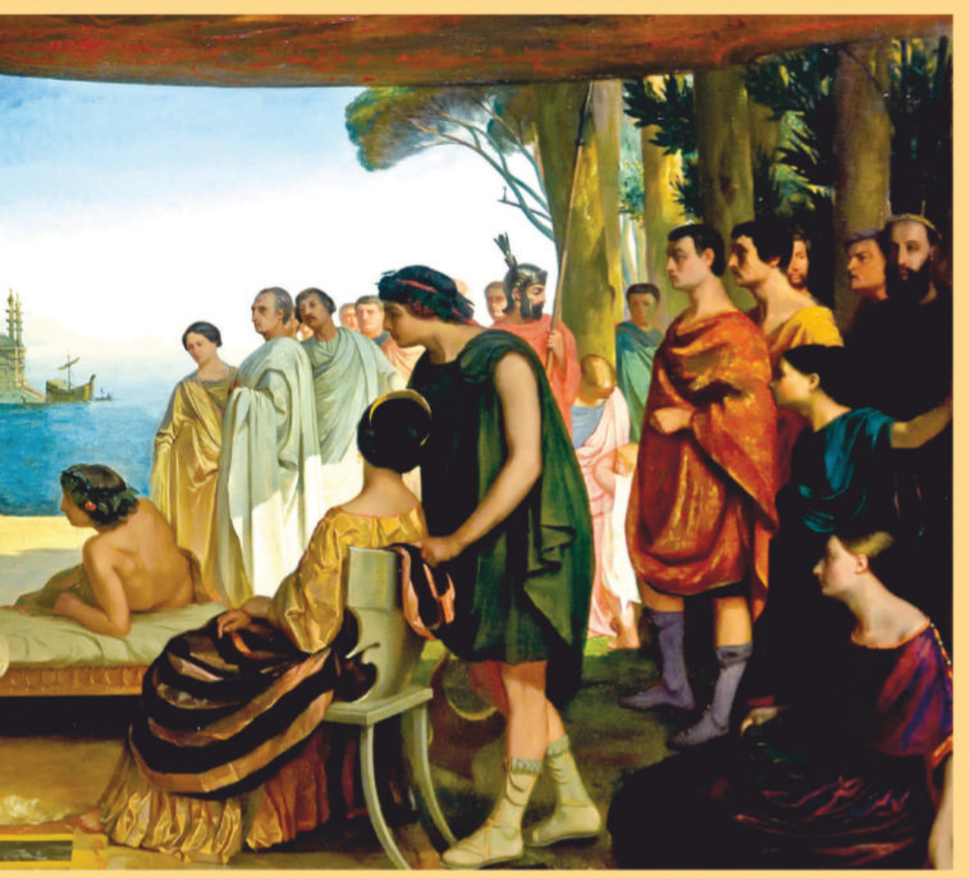


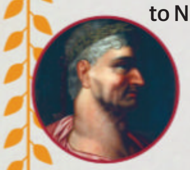
TIMELINE OF NERO

A short breakdown of the key events in the emperor's life

37 CE

Nero is born as Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus to Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus and Agrippina the Younger.

50 CE



Nero is adopted by Emperor Claudius following his marriage to Nero's mother, Agrippina. He is named as Claudius' heir.

53 CE

Nero marries his stepsister Octavia, the daughter of Claudius, and is named proconsul of the Senate.

54 CE

Following the death of Claudius, Nero becomes Roman emperor, aged 17.

58 CE

Nero begins an affair with a noblewoman named Poppaea Sabina.

59 CE

Opposing her son's wish to divorce Octavia, Nero orders the death of his mother Agrippina.

60 CE

Boudicca leads a revolt of the Iceni and other tribes in Britannia against Roman occupation.

62 CE

Nero divorces Octavia, claiming she is infertile, and marries Poppaea Sabina, who is already pregnant. He later orders Octavia to be killed.

64 CE

The Great Fire rages through Rome, destroying an estimated 75 percent of the city. Some in Rome blame Nero, but he points the finger at Christians.

65 CE

A plot to assassinate Nero, started by Gaius Calpurnius Piso, is exposed. The Pisonian conspirators are executed.

68 CE

A movement grows to overthrow Nero and replace him with Servius Sulpicius Galba. Nero's bodyguards defect and the Senate condemns him to death. He takes his own life instead.

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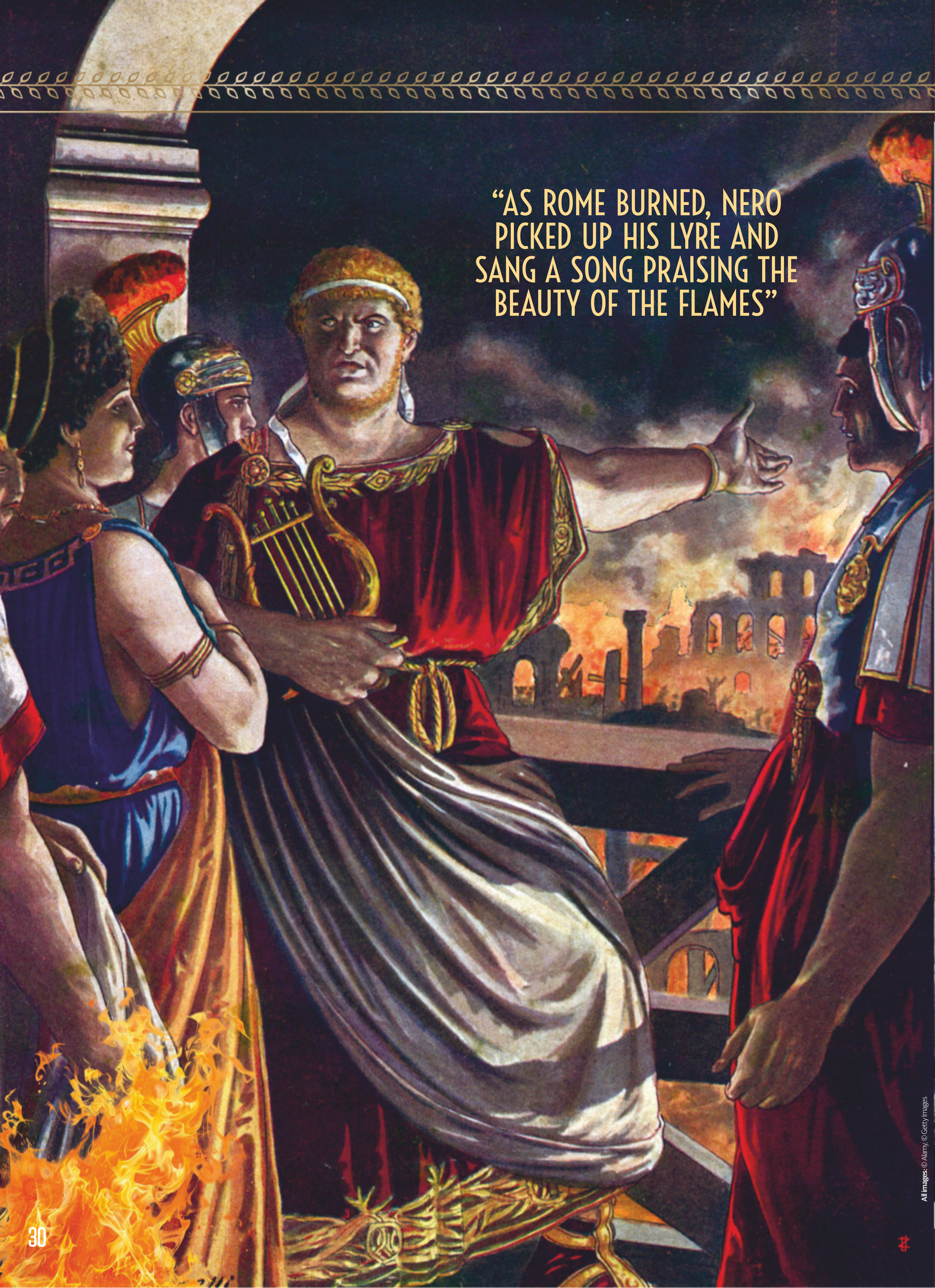
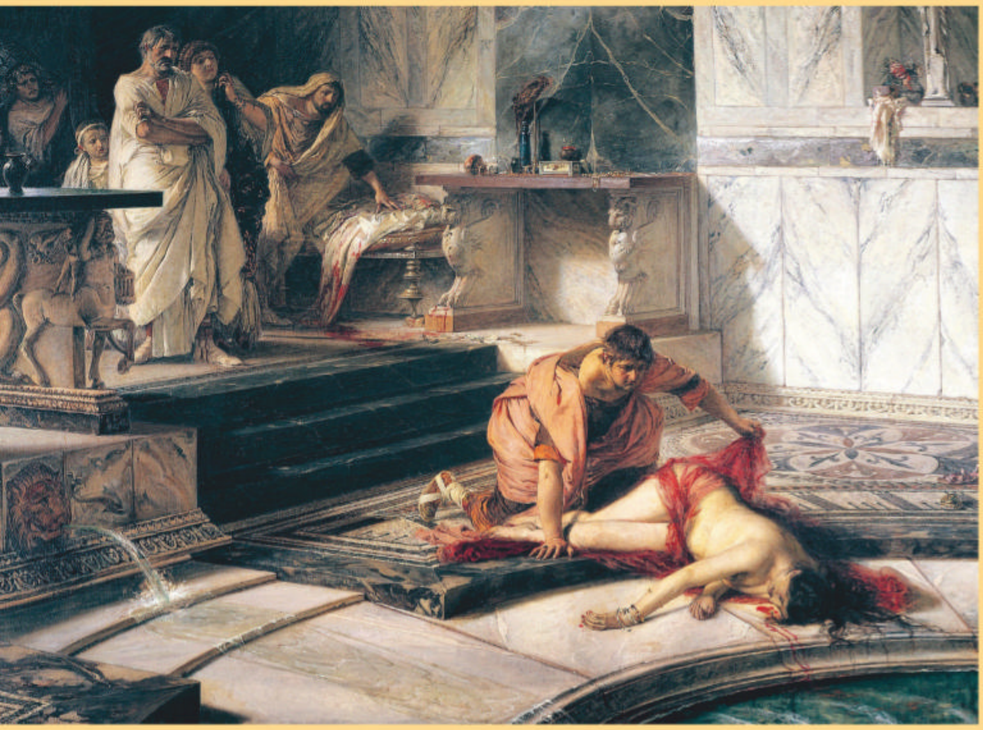


“AS ROME BURNED, NERO PICKED UP HIS LYRE AND SANG A SONG PRAISING THE BEAUTY OF THE FLAMES”

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images



LEFT The emperor had his mother Agrippina murdered then claimed she'd taken her own life

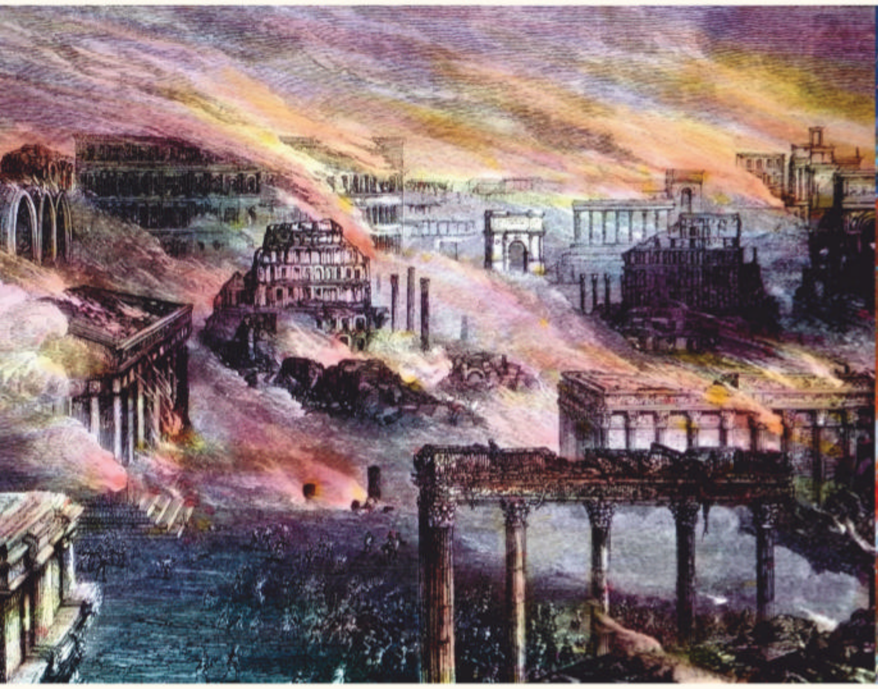
adultery against Octavia and had her executed in public, to the horror of virtually everyone. He then married Poppea, but this failed to quell the widespread belief that Nero was a sexual degenerate incapable of proper Roman virtues like self-control and chastity. Stories about his spectacular dedication to sexual pleasure abound in the sources, alongside stories about his wild extravagance. The biographer Suetonius claims that the emperor went fishing with nets made from gold thread, never wore the same clothing twice and shod his horses with silver.

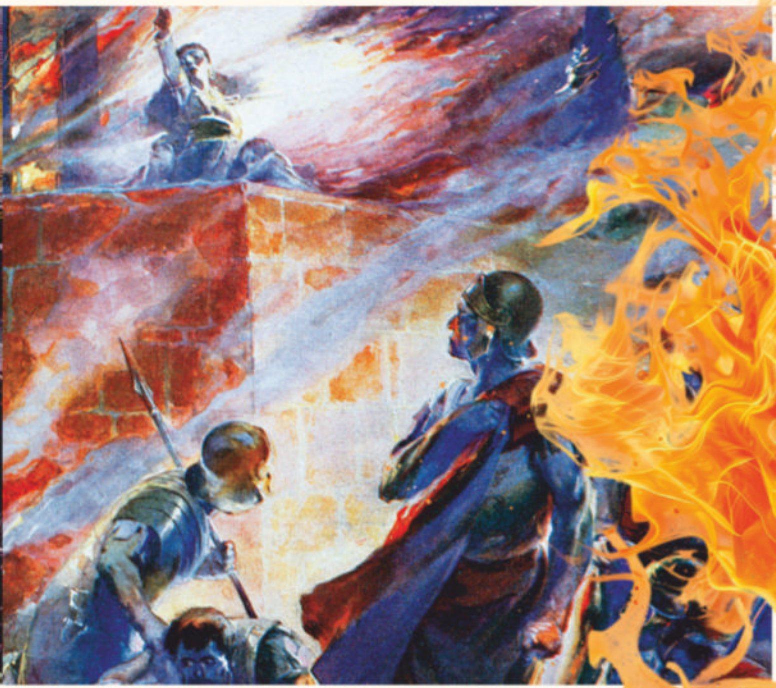
Nero's reputation for excess reached its acme in the aftermath of the worst disaster to hit Rome in centuries. On 19 July 64 CE a fire broke out in some shops beside the Circus Maximus and was driven by an unseasonably strong wind through the hills and valleys. Large fires were not uncommon in Rome, a busy city built primarily of wood, and sometimes they destroyed temples and other significant buildings. The night-watch were trained to look out for fires, and Nero's great-grandfather Augustus had instituted a state fire service in 22 BCE. These firefighters fought the blaze of 64 CE for seven days as it raged through the city, devouring everything from the rickety tenements to the largest temples, from the smallest home to Nero's Palatine palace, and killing thousands of people in the process. Just when they thought it had gone out, on 25 July it flared up and burned for another two days. The fire devastated Rome, displaced a huge number of people and left behind a city of smoking rubble.

Of the three surviving narrative sources that describe Nero's reign, all three repeat the story that the emperor fiddled while Rome burned. The story specifically is that he was not in Rome at the time of the fire, but by the sea in Antium, and took his time returning to the stricken city. At some point during the nine days of chaos, Nero picked up his lyre and performed a song about the fall of Troy. In Suetonius and Dio's telling, this occurred while Nero was on the Esquiline Hill and was sung in praise of "the beauty of the flames". Tacitus' version has him performing on his private stage at his villa outside Rome, which was slightly less flamboyant – but only slightly. The people of Rome expected their emperor to help them, or at least be a visible and reassuring presence. Instead, he stayed away and gave his citizens the impression that he wasn't just indifferent to their pain, but actually rejoiced in it.

It would be hard for any leader to survive the cataclysm of the Great Fire without criticism of some sort, but Nero mishandled the aftermath spectacularly. Although he allowed refugees to live in his private gardens and instituted sensible rebuilding policies to reduce the likelihood of future fires, he wasted

BELOW Nero mishandled the Great Fire of Rome so badly that many people believed he'd had it started deliberately





“THE STORIES ABOUT NERO’S SEXUAL EXPLOITS AND LUXURIOUS EXTRAVAGANCE RANGE FROM THE ASTONISHING TO THE UNBELIEVABLE”

any potential goodwill by clearing great swathes of central Rome to build himself an enormous palace known as the Golden House. The complex spanned from the Palatine to the Esquiline Hills and included gardens, lakes, forests and an artificial lake, all designed to inspire awe. The palace itself contained a 37m bronze statue of Nero and was decorated with gold leaf and precious stones. To pay for this project, and for the rest of the rebuilding of Rome, Nero extracted huge taxes and tributes from the provinces and Roman allies. The people of Rome, who had lost everything, boggled at the excess and at the speed at which the complex was completed, and the provincials who were paying for it grew angry at the waste of their tax money. The empire became convinced that Nero had deliberately started the fire so he could rebuild the city for his own pleasure. To stem this rumour, he decided to blame a new cult for setting the fire and began to round up the followers of a dead man named Christus. These Christians were publicly executed in such horrific ways and in such large numbers that even the Roman audiences began to sympathise with them, feeling that Nero had gone too far in punishing the whole for the alleged acts of a few. And still no one believed that the Christians had begun the fire.

The first conspiracy to kill him was uncovered in 65 CE. It was led by Gaius Piso and consisted of people who hated the emperor on a very personal level. One conspirator joined because Nero stifled the performance of his work and another because Nero had written a cruel poem about him. When the plot was betrayed, a conspirator told Nero that he wanted him dead because he hated him: “I began to hate you when you became the murderer of your mother and your wife, and a charioteer and an actor and an arsonist.” People hated Nero because they were ashamed to call him Augustus and emperor, and because he acted as though he was the best man in the empire – the Princeps – while behaving like the lowest member of Roman society. His love of theatrics, both on stage and in his life, and of silky things, threatened the masculinity and Romanness of the powerful men whose consent he needed to rule. Piso’s conspiracy failed, giving Nero a chance to reflect on what had caused it and how he could win back the support of the Senate and the armies. Needless to say, he squandered this chance too.

His great love in life was the stage, and he had the misfortune to be born into the imperial family and raised to be a military monarch when all he really yearned for was the theatre. Unfortunately for Nero and everyone forced to endure his reign, Roman political culture considered theatre to be a low form of art, degraded and degrading to both participant and viewer, and actors were classed as infames – legally without honour.

Agrippina had prevented Nero from patronising theatrical events during her lifetime, but as soon as she was dead he lost his inhibitions. The year she died, to celebrate his coming into manhood with the first shaving of his beard, Nero threw the Juvenalian Games, a Greek-style theatrical competition where actors, musicians and poets competed for prizes. This was shocking enough, but it was compounded by Nero himself appearing on stage as a performer. The only saving grace was that the public was not invited, only his friends and associates, all of

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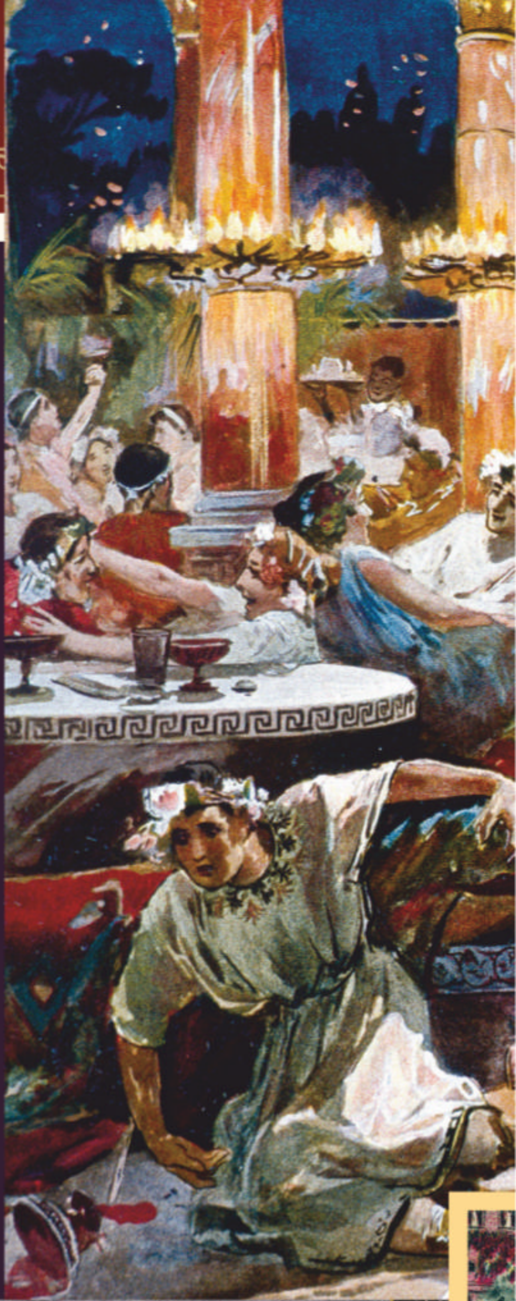
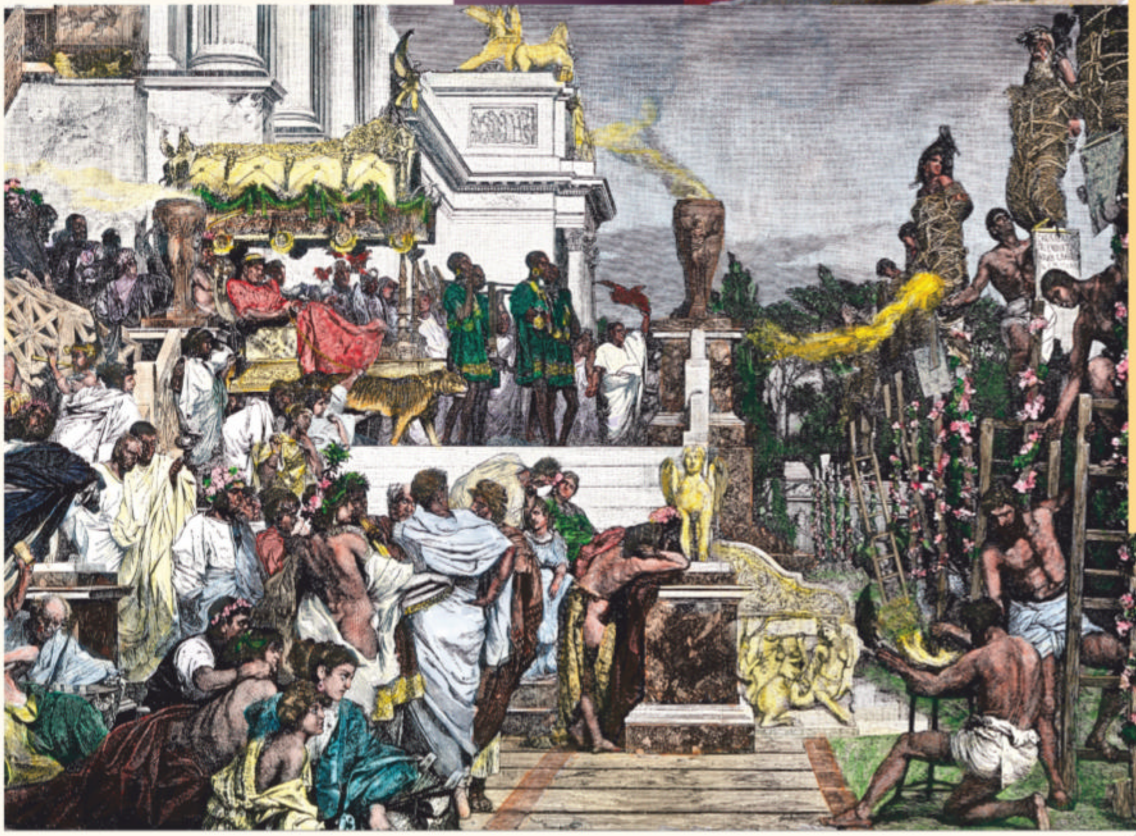
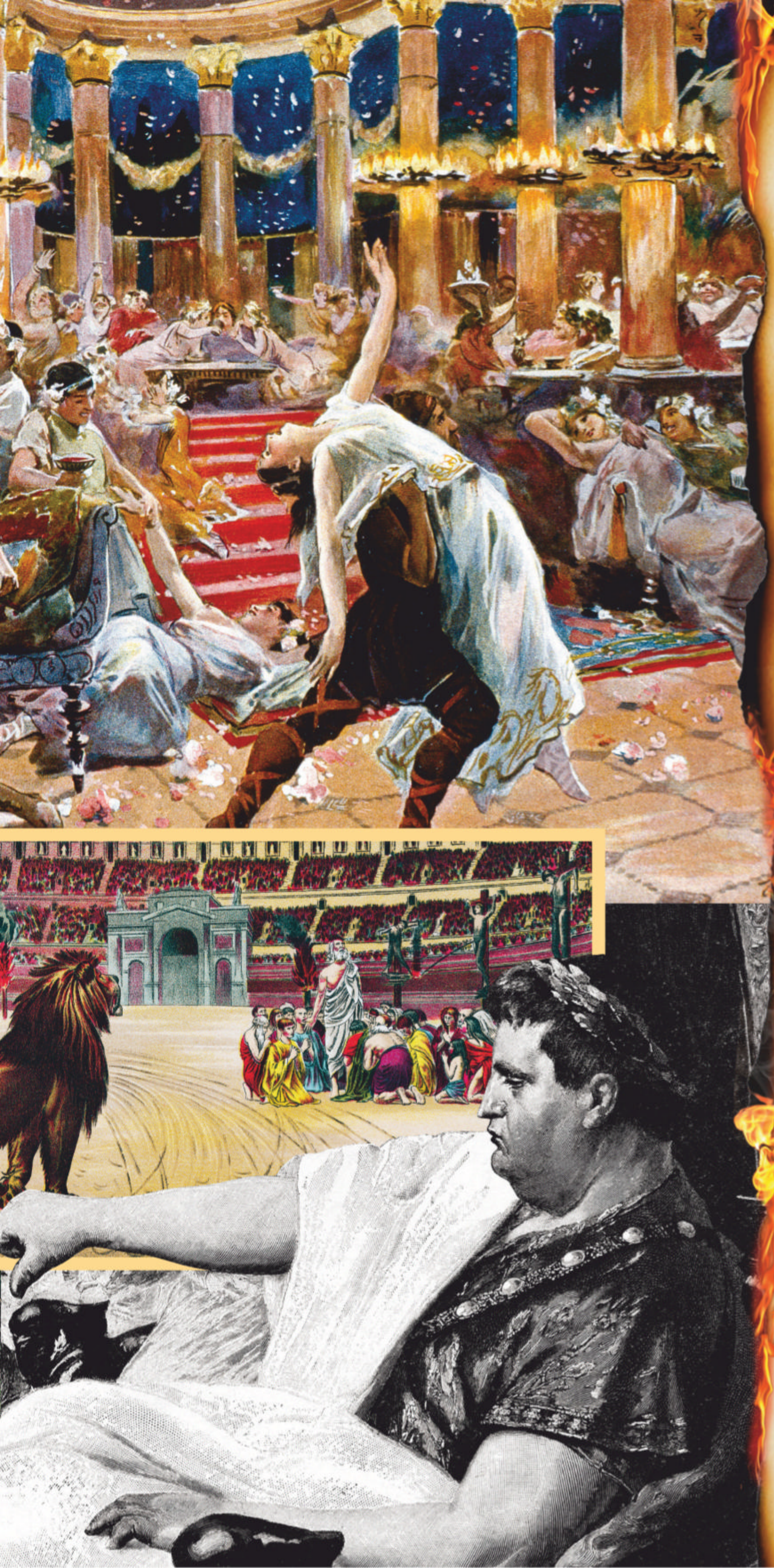


RIGHT Nero was more interested in feasting and sex than being a good emperor

BOTTOM AND BELOW-RIGHT After the Great Fire of 64 CE, Nero blamed Christians and executed some by using them as torches for late-night chariot races





PLUS AND MINUS

Emperor Nero's legacy was mixed, to say the least...

👍 Nero returned to Rome following the Great Fire to aid in the reconstruction, providing food to those in need and building improved infrastructure to prevent future destruction.

👎 He had several of his relatives killed, including his mother Agrippina, his step-brother Britannicus and his first wife Octavia. It's alleged that he also killed his second wife, kicking her while she was pregnant.

👍 Nero passed laws to make the taxation system much more transparent. In practice this meant that people had a much clearer idea of what money they owed the state and those dodging their responsibilities could be identified.

👎 Having blamed Christians for the Great Fire, he demanded they renounce their faith or face punishment. Those punishments included crucifixion, being thrown to wild animals or being burned alive.

👍 Nero was a committed patron of the arts, offering support to artists and musicians during his reign.

👎 While he may have rebuilt Rome after the fire, he also spent a substantial sum building the Domus Aurea, or Golden House, for himself, covering over 400,000-square-metres. It included a 37-metre-tall bronze statue called the Colossus Neronis.

👍 He managed to negotiate a peace with the Parthians, who the Romans had been fighting for five years. This enabled Rome to focus its military resources in the west.

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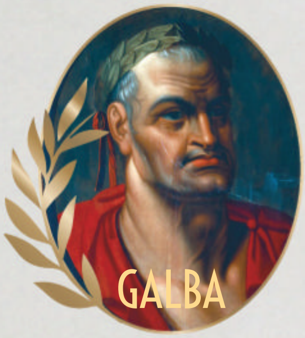
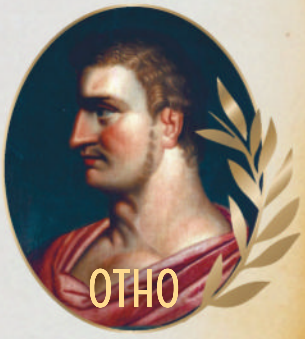
THE YEAR OF THE FOUR EMPERORS

A period of turmoil followed Nero's death

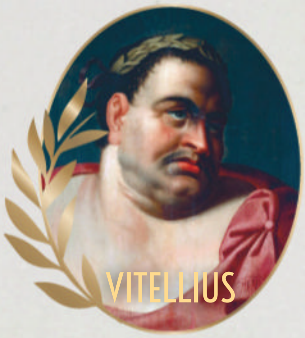


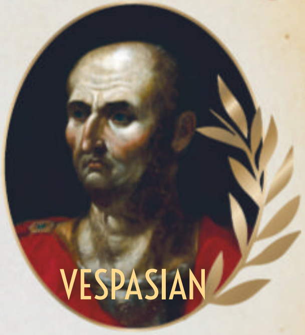


Nero's demise brought the Julio-Claudian dynasty to an end, and the race to launch a new Roman dynasty began with Servius Sulpicius Galba. However, Galba proved to be just as ruthless and tyrannical as Nero at his worst, killing his opponents and seizing property from Roman citizens. He also failed to pay the military, which led them to back General Aulus Vitellius as his replacement. Galba was murdered after seven months in power and his head was delivered to the Senate's pick for new ruler, Marcus Salvius Otho, in January 69 CE.

The Senate backed Otho, a former governor (and former husband of Nero's second wife) of Lusitania, over Vitellius while the latter was still marching on Rome. The forces of the two men clashed, with a decisive victory for Vitellius at the Battle of Bedriacum, where Cassius Dio put the death toll at 40,000. Otho took his own life rather than see further bloodshed, leaving the path clear for Vitellius after three months in charge.

The Senate made Vitellius emperor while he was in Gaul and he proceeded to triumphantly march home before installing himself as emperor, but he proved to be another brutal ruler. Titus Flavius Vespasianus, or Vespasian, was leading his legions in the east while all this was happening. His men declared him emperor only a few months into Vitellius' reign. Many other legions followed, building a massive force behind Vespasian. They headed for Rome, meeting Vitellius' army at the Second Battle of Bedriacum. Vespasian's men broke through and entered Rome, with more than 50,000 dying in the city, according to Dio. Vitellius was captured, tortured and dragged through the streets. The senate then declared Vespasian emperor in December 69 CE, the fourth emperor in that calendar year, beginning the Flavian dynasty.





whom applauded and celebrated the emperor's 'wonderful' achievement.

Buoyed by the success of these private games, Nero instituted a public event; a Roman version of the Greek festivals such as the Great Dionysia in Athens where Euripides and Sophocles had won their fame. He called his festival the Quinquennial Games, to be held every five years starting in 60 CE. The conservative response to this festival can be seen in Tacitus' description of it as "demeaning" and "shameful", a festival of "corrupting vice" that would "overthrow the foundations of national morality". But no one dared tell Nero this.

Part of the problem was his genuine love of performing on stage. He got a joy from it that he was not willing to give up, no matter how many people tried to kill him. Another part of the problem was that plenty of people were willing to excuse his acting and reward him for it. After the Pisonian conspirators were executed and plenty of others, including the philosopher Seneca, driven to suicide, one senator proposed that the whole affair demonstrated that Nero was in fact a god and should be given divine honours while still alive. Nero himself had to veto that. It's easy to see how a young man could be turned into a megalomaniac by such treatment and think that he could get away with his greatest crime, at least in the eyes of the Roman elite: performing on stage in Rome.

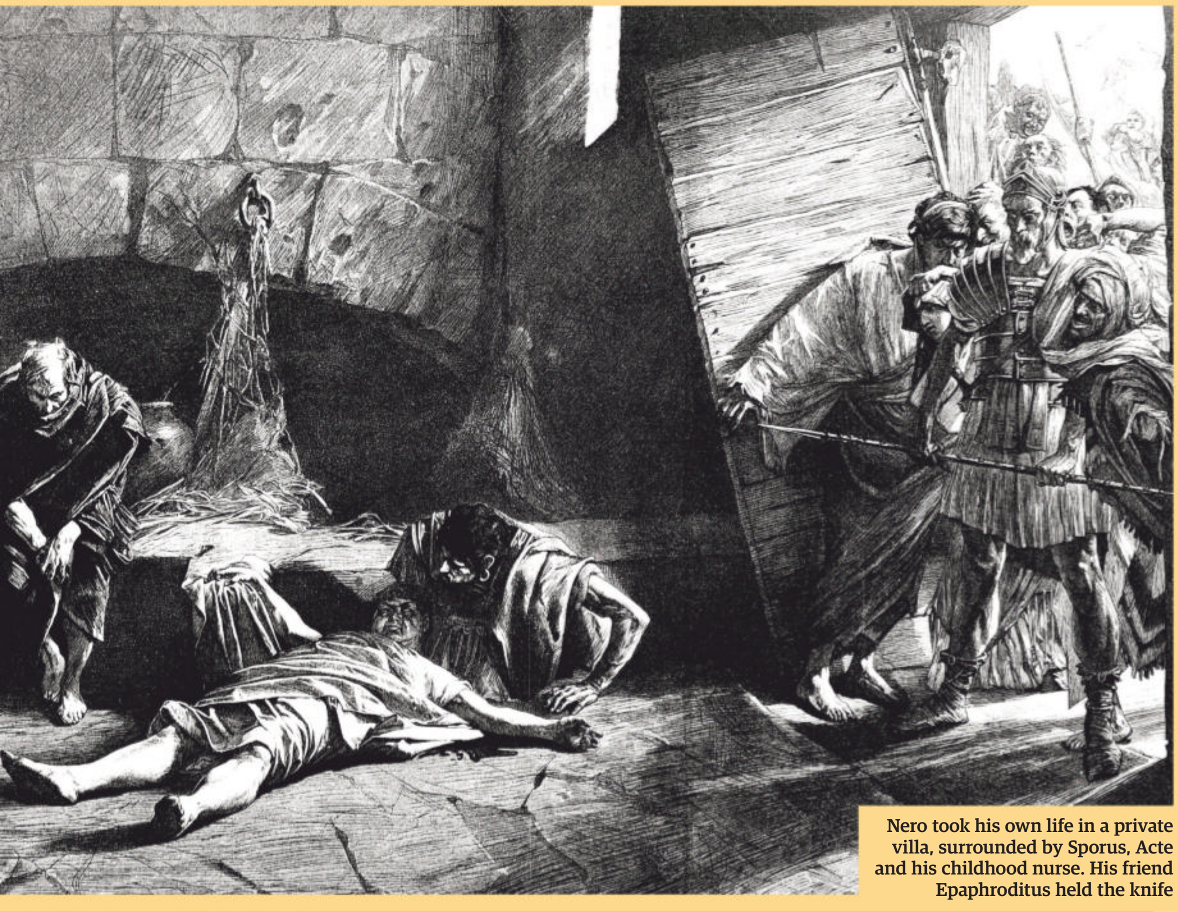
He had previously only performed in private or outside of Rome because even he knew that it was scandalous behaviour. Romans considered actors to be akin to sex workers, the least-honourable of all people. The emperor was supposed to be the most honourable person in the empire and was expected to live up to the sacred names of Augustus and Caesar. Acting was a disgraceful activity and it shamed the Romans, especially the armies, to bow to an actor.

It didn't help that he was also extremely bad at singing and acting, and forced people to watch. Suetonius tells of people pretending to die so they could escape his hideous performances. So bad was the spectacle of the emperor butchering songs on stage that it overshadowed the death of his wife Poppea, though it was generally believed he had murdered her by kicking her while she was pregnant.

The final two years of his reign only reinforced the humiliation of the Roman elites because he took

ABOVE Nero's Golden House had a huge octagonal dining room with a revolving ceiling. The walls were decorated with frescos, gold leaf and gems

BELOW After the murders, the fire and the Golden House, no one could tolerate Nero performing on stage



Nero took his own life in a private villa, surrounded by Sporus, Acte and his childhood nurse. His friend Epaphroditus held the knife

> “I BEGAN TO HATE YOU WHEN YOU BECAME THE MURDERER OF YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR WIFE, AND A CHARIOTEER AND AN ACTOR AND AN ARSONIST”

himself on a tour of Greece, where he forced all the cities to hold their ancient games so he could win all the prizes. While he was off performing for the approval of a conquered nation, instead of appointing an honourable regent he put a freedman named Helius in charge of running Rome, leaving senators to obey the commands of a man who had been a slave or be executed. Since the Pisonian conspiracy, executions of senators had become a common occurrence, fostering an atmosphere of terror as well as shame. When the emperor finally returned to Rome in 68 CE, the Senate swallowed their disgust once more, now in fear that falling out of favour with Nero might mean death, and they allowed him to enter the city with his acting prizes as though he were a triumphant general returning from a successful war. This, it seems, was the final straw for Nero’s armies.

The rebellion started on the anniversary of the death of Agrippina when Vindex, the governor of Gaul, led his legions in revolt. According to Dio, Vindex hated Nero’s murderous ways and extravagance, and felt that watching his emperor act in Greek plays was a horror that rendered Nero unfit to receive his homage and obedience. The revolt quickly spread to Hispania where, for similar reasons, the general Galba declared himself emperor, and to Lusitania, where Otho finally got his revenge by joining in. Here Nero made his final, stupidest mistake. He sent his loyal German legions to fight the rebels and they won, with Galba’s troops defeated and Vindex taking his own life. At this moment Nero could have pursued the victory and won the war, living to play the lyre to his heart’s content. Instead, he heard rumours that his German legions had offered to support their commander if he wanted to challenge Galba for the Roman throne. The commander had rejected the offer, but the rumour terrified Nero. His panic infected the Praetorian Guard in Rome, who immediately abandoned him. Without any military support, Nero turned to the Senate, who were grateful to finally tell him how they really felt. They proclaimed him a public enemy and he went on the run. Vindex had declared against Nero in mid-March 68 CE and less than three months later, having fought (and won) a single battle, Nero took his own life in disgrace.

He is remembered as the worst of all the emperors because he failed in every way. He ended a dynasty by killing all his family and refusing to have an heir. He ended his own reign by believing his own hype and thinking he could get away with anything. He never realised that his immoderation, brazen murders and decadence wore away at the self-respect and honour of his subjects. He may, however, have survived all these things because there were no Julio-Claudians left to replace him. He may even have survived the building of the Golden House, but the acting was a misstep too far. By performing on stage, he made himself dishonourable and thus made all his subjects dishonourable. Vindex and Galba, old-school men with old-school morals, believed they needed to destroy him to save Romanness. No other emperor was ever perceived as such a threat to Rome itself. ○

BELOW This contemporary bust of Nero was reworked in the 17th century to make his face match his dissolute reputation

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WEIRD WILD WEST

From ghost trains to ghost bandits, Wild Bill Hickok to wild camels, here are ten strange stories from America's frontier

Written by Callum McKelvie

In the 19th century, the young nation of America was growing fast and was well on its way to becoming the world power we know today. The acquisition of vast swathes of land in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 effectively doubled the size of the US, and included territory that now comprises 15 states, among them Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Texas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming. By the late 1860s, the end of the civil war and the growth of the railways led settlers to venture further into the new world than ever before. These rugged new territories (and later the period itself) came to be known as the Wild West.

This was a time of bandits, cattle rustlers and gunslingers. But if folklore is to be believed it was also a time of many curious happenings. These frontier lands were home to serial killers and even spectral apparitions. Some of these stories originated during the period, but others have formed over time and become all the stranger for the retelling.

The truth of many of these stories will perhaps never be known for certain. As with all folk tales and legends, they have been expanded upon and embellished throughout the decades since they first appeared. Nonetheless they are shining examples of the peculiar fascination this period holds, how the unknown can inspire the imagination, and of the many bizarre happenings that were said to have occurred in the Weird Wild West. ▶

THE GHOST BANDIT OF SIX MILE CANYON

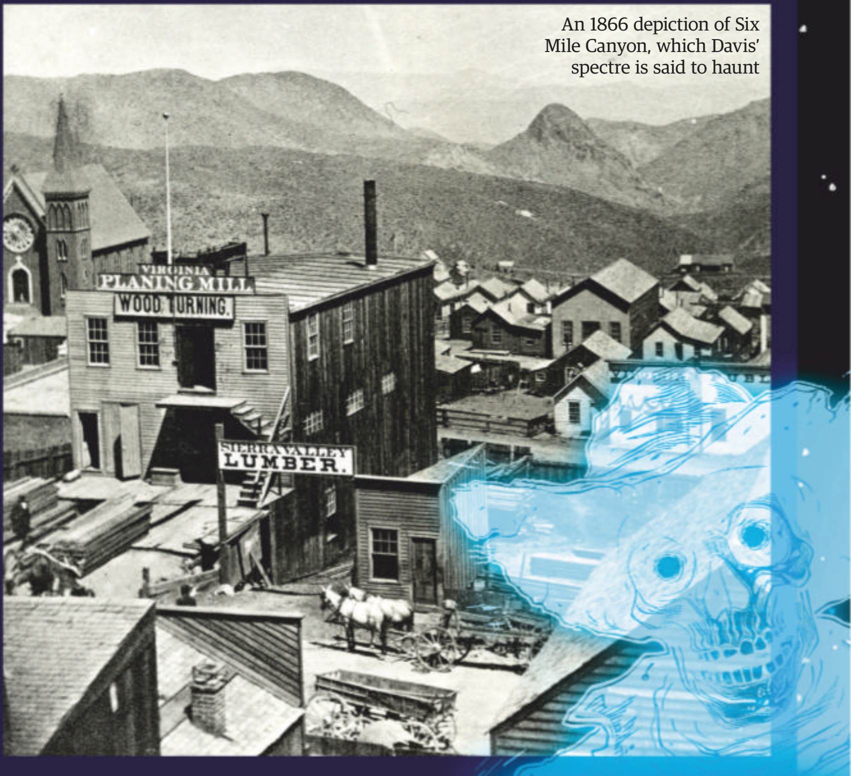
NEVADA

With a name that's better-suited to an episode of *Scooby-Doo*, The Ghost Bandit of Six Mile Canyon is said to be the returning spirit of train robber Big Jack Davis. His story is more eccentric than most, with the line between fact and fiction even harder to discern.

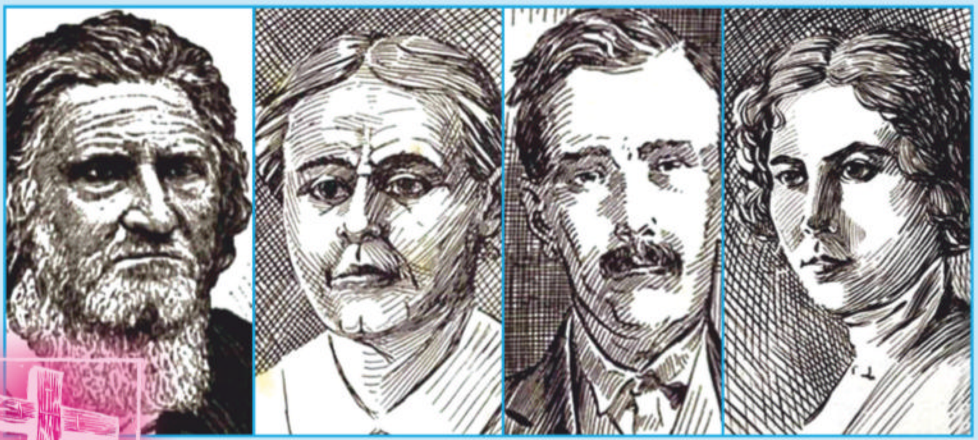
The story goes that Davis was a businessman who began operating a small bullion mill in the Six Mile Canyon area in Nevada, near Virginia City, some time in the 1850s-60s. His business provided useful cover when Davis began moonlighting as the leader of a gang of train robbers, allowing him to melt down the stolen gold and resell it legitimately. His most audacious heist was on the night of 5 November 1870, when his gang stole nearly $40,000 in currency.

Davis was eventually caught and sentenced to ten years in jail, but he only served five after informing on some of his fellow inmates who'd attempted to escape. After his release, Davis couldn't resist the lure of another heist, and on 13 September 1877 he was shot while attempting to rob a stagecoach.

Soon after his death the spooky stories began. There were already rumours that Davis had hidden some of his gold and stolen loot somewhere in Six Mile Canyon, and over the years various groups of treasure hunters looking for it were said to have witnessed a terrifying spectre. A 1977 edition of the *Nevada Appeal* newspaper's *Apple Tree* magazine reported that one such group was "frightened out of their wits at the sight of a gigantic and terrible apparition of some kind that suddenly came up out of the very ground on which they were working".



An 1866 depiction of Six Mile Canyon, which Davis' spectre is said to haunt



THE BLOODY BENDERS

KANSAS

The term 'serial killer' was first coined in the 1930s but was not popularised until the 1970s, when it was used by FBI agent Robert Ressler. One of the first documented accounts of multiple murderers saw residents of 19th-century Kansas living in fear of a notorious family of sociopaths known as The Bloody Benders.

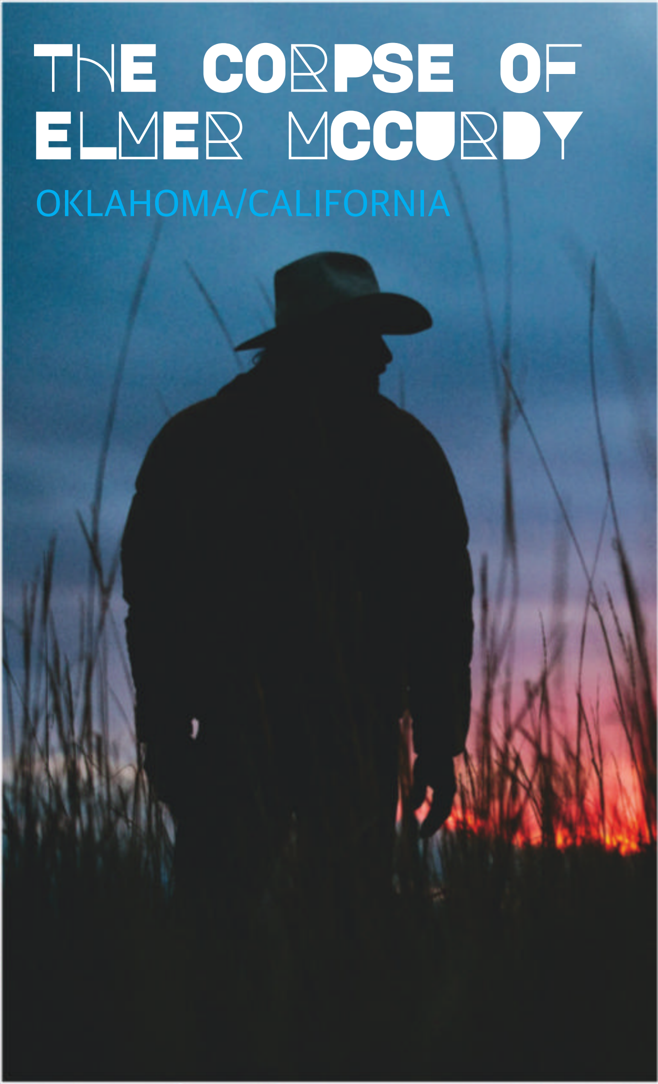
By 1873, the authorities in Kansas were becoming increasingly concerned by a number of disappearances in the state. The most high-profile of these was Dr William York, the brother of Colonel Alexander York, a member of the Senate. When Dr York's body was discovered in the grounds of the Bender family's abandoned farm, they were immediately under suspicion.

The Bender family consisted of John and Elvira Bender and their adult children Kate and John Bender Jr. It was speculated that the family would welcome weary travellers into their cabin, and once the victim had entered they would bludgeon them and cut their throat. They would then rob the poor traveller and leave them to slowly bleed to death in the cabin's cellar. Fourteen bodies were eventually discovered on the farm.

Despite a nationwide hunt, with numerous false leads, the Benders were never found. At the time, the gruesome murders gripped the United States and Kansas saw a flood of visitors desperate to see the Bender house of horrors for themselves. Many of them took pieces of it away as souvenirs and eventually there was nothing left of the structure. To this day, what was fact and what was fiction about the Bender family remains unknown.

THE CORPSE OF ELMER MCCURDY

OKLAHOMA/CALIFORNIA



THE MYSTERY OF THE 'SHANGHAI TUNNELS' OF PORTLAND

OREGON

In the 19th century a legend began to form that Portland Harbour was home to a disturbing secret. Stories circulated about a network of tunnels deep beneath the surface that were being used to spirit away civilians from the city's bars and taverns and onto ships. Here they would be pressed into labour in a practice known as 'shanghaiing', or 'crimping'.

These underground passages were constructed so goods could be easily moved from the waterfront to the basement storage areas of shops and businesses. However, popular folklore states that unsuspecting revellers, whose drinks had been drugged, were hauled through these tunnels to ships in the harbour. By the time they awoke, the ship had already put out to sea.

How true are these tales? Despite their prevalence, they are somewhat dubious. The Oregon Historical society states that while "historians of the Old Town district have confirmed that shanghaiing and crimping occurred there, along with other criminal and unsavoury activities", little evidence can be found of any connection to a secret network of tunnels.

Nonetheless there are tours offered of areas where it is claimed 'shanghaiing' took place, so those wishing to venture down into the dark can do so… if they dare.

The Wild West was filled with outlaws and criminals, and one of the most notorious was Elmer McCurdy, who met a sorry end in October 1911. McCurdy and his gang had robbed a train in Oklahoma, though their meagre haul – $45-worth of whiskey – was hardly worth the effort. Two days later McCurdy was hunted down and shot to death, and was seemingly destined to become just another bandit who paid the ultimate price for their crimes.

But decades after McCurdy's demise his story took a strange turn. In 1976 *The Six Million Dollar Man* was one of the most popular shows on American television and told the story of Colonel Steve Austin, who becomes a cyborg working for the United States. One episode involved a villain's secret lair hidden in a ghost train, and filming took place at the Nu-Pike Amusement Park's Laff in the Dark haunted ride at Long Beach, California.

But one particular dummy, sprayed with orange paint and hanging from a noose, didn't quite fit the scene. When removing it, the crew accidentally damaged its arm and were horrified to discover something inside – human bone. The 'dummy' was in fact the mummified remains of McCurdy. The undertaker Joseph L Johnson had not been paid for his services and had put the body on display for paying audiences. McCurdy had then been passed around various carnivals and fairgrounds until finally arriving at Long Beach.

According to author Christine Quigley in *Modern Mummies*, McCurdy was finally laid to rest on 22 April 1977 – with concrete poured into his grave to prevent the remains being mistreated further.

Filming of *The Six Million Dollar Man* TV show took a gruesome turn

The Winchester Mystery House is a popular tourist attraction

THE WINCHESTER MYSTERY HOUSE

CALIFORNIA

Perhaps the most famous weapon associated with the Wild West is the Winchester rifle. The repeating rifle helped put Oliver Fisher Winchester's company on the map, having acquired the design and patent of Benjamin Tyler Henry's 'Henry Rifle' in 1860. The first Winchester model followed in 1866 and both this and the 1873 version were in widespread use across America's frontier. The heir to this empire was William Wirt Winchester, who in 1832 married the love of his life, Sarah Lockwood Pardee.

But tragedy was on the horizon. William suffered from tuberculosis and died in 1881 at the age of 43, and Sarah inherited not only the Winchester company but also the vast fortune. However, having suffered a number of other bereavements, including her mother in 1880 and her father-in-law in 1881, she withdrew from society and moved to California.

Purchasing a sprawling farmhouse in San Jose, she immediately began remodelling the home… and seemingly never stopped. The result includes skylights situated in the floors, staircases that lead nowhere and secret passages.

Popular legend has it that Sarah believed she was being haunted by the ghosts of people slain by the Winchester weapons, and she altered the house in this haphazard manner to confuse these spirits and keep them at bay.

Over the years this macabre story has become part of Californian folklore, and in 2018 the movie *Winchester*, starring Helen Mirren as Sarah Winchester, drew on the ghostly legend as the basis for its plot.

Sarah Winchester who designed and constructed the bizarre house.

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WILD BILL AND THE WELL-ENDOWED BULL

TEXAS

Wild Bill Hickok is without doubt one of the most famous figures of the Wild West. A lawman and marksman of some repute, he eventually became a renowned folk hero and one of the most established icons of frontier life. As with any well-known personality, there are many legends and tales told about him, but one in particular is a peculiar story concerning a well-endowed bull.

Or, at the very least, a painting of a bull. In 1871, Phil Coe and Ben Thompson became joint owners of the Bull's Head Saloon in Abilene, Texas. Fancying a spot of redecorating, they adorned their new premises with a painting of a bull with a comically large member – that soon offended some of the local women. When Coe and Thompson refused to remove the painting, Hickok did so himself.

Animosity between the men grew, and when Coe boasted to Hickok that his aim was so accurate that he could "kill a crow on the wing", Hickok famously responded: "Did the crow have a pistol? Was he shooting back? I will be." Eventually Coe fired at Hickok when he was attempting to break up a fight in the street. When Coe attempted to shoot Hickok once more, the famed gunslinger drew faster and mortally wounded Coe. He died of his injuries a few days later. Tragically, during the incident Hickok thought another gunman was creeping up on him and fired – killing a close friend.

While there are many stories concerning Hickok, the shootout with Coe is one of the most famous. But the fact that the feud began over a painting of a bull's nether regions is rather less celebrated.

THE KENTUCKY MEAT SHOWER

KENTUCKY

On 3 March 1876, at Olympia Springs in Bath County, Kentucky, Mrs Crouch was sitting in her yard when chunks of beef-like meat began to fall from the sky. According to a *New York Times* report, two men tasted it and said it was most likely "mutton or venison".

Sounds ridiculous, but there is surprising evidence that this strange event really happened. Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, has among its collections a bottle containing one of the pieces of meat. Tests on the substance have been inconclusive and experts are still unsure what animal the flesh comes from.

So what caused the bizarre shower? In an 1876 edition of the *Louisville Medical News*, Dr L D Kastebine speculated that it may have been caused by a flock of vultures. The birds are known for their ability to vomit as a defence mechanism, and it's possible that a flock disposed of their latest meal all over Mrs Crouch's yard.

Keen to solve the mystery, in 2007 Professor Kurt Gohde attended Court Days, a popular Kentucky festival, with jelly beans whose flavour matched the unknown meat. He hoped that brave tasters might be able to identify the animal, but to no avail.

THE RED GHOST

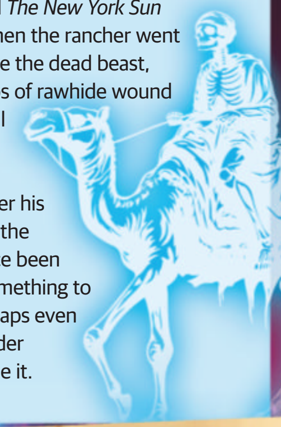
ARIZONA

In 1851, US Secretary of War Jefferson Davis had a grand idea: camels should be imported into the United States to help with westward expansion. In 1857, under the direction of the military, 75 were brought to the American West.

Initially the camels proved useful. Edward Fitzgerald Beale was able to travel with 25 of the beasts nearly 2,000km from Fort Defiance, Arizona, to the Colorado River near California. But the start of the Civil War in 1861 stopped their widespread use, and by the mid-1860s the camels had been auctioned off or let loose into the wild.

Twenty years later stories of a huge monster, most likely one of the camels but purportedly 9m tall, began to spread through Arizona. In 1883 the *Mohave County Miner* reported that a farmer's wife had been trampled to death by the creature. Another woman claimed she'd seen a "huge reddish-coloured beast" with a skeletal corpse strapped to its back.

The beast was eventually killed by a rancher, and *The New York Sun* reported: "When the rancher went out to examine the dead beast, he found strips of rawhide wound and twisted all over his back, his shoulders, and even under his tail." It's likely the strips had once been used to tie something to it's back, perhaps even the skeletal rider spotted astride it.



THE PHANTOM TRAIN OF MARSHALL PASS

COLORADO

In 1880, the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad extended their Denver to Salt Lake City route through Marshall Pass in Colorado. The steep, narrow pass is a foreboding place, and it's no wonder that such terrain would make people uneasy. But when railroad engineer Nelson Edwards arrived for work in 1891 he was more on edge than usual.

The train set off as normal that night, but at some point along the journey Edwards was alerted to the sound of another train whistle. The other train gained upon Edwards' locomotive until, according to a report in *The Port Fairy Gazette*, he saw a "white form" inside the cabin as well as another on top of the carriages. Eventually, Edwards was able to move onto a side rail and allow the spectral pursuers to pass.

For weeks beforehand, other railroad workers claimed to have spotted a ghostly locomotive on the tracks. According to *Colorado Central Magazine*, in November of 1888 a train travelling through Marshall Pass had crashed, killing several people on board. Had Edwards witnessed the phantoms of this dreadful accident?

THE COLORADO CANNIBAL

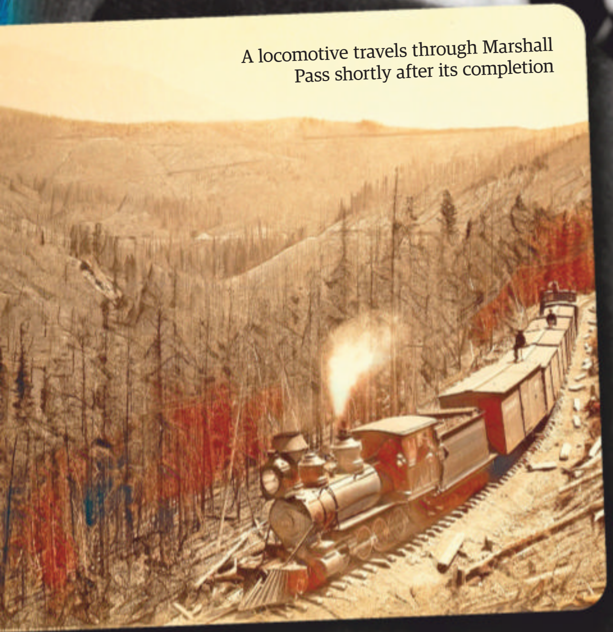
COLORADO

In 1848 the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in California led to a gold rush as more than 300,000 people flocked to the area hoping to make their fortune. Ten years later Colorado experienced a similar frenzy: the Pike's Peak Gold Rush.

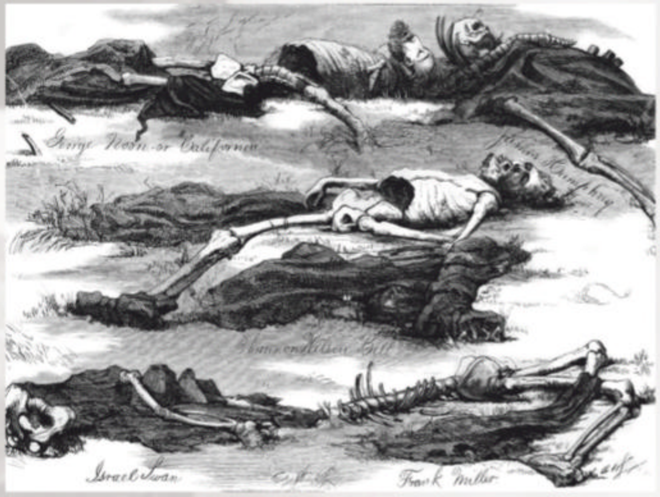
In February 1874, Alfred Packer and six other men headed to Colorado's San Juan Mountains, eager to search for undiscovered gold deposits. Along the way they met Ute Chief Ouray, who warned the men that they were unprepared for looming bad weather and implored them to turn back. Undeterred, the men continued their journey.

Six days later, Packer wandered down from the mountains – alone. At first he claimed to have become separated from his companions in the storm but, under pressure, confessed that as each of the men had died, the survivors had been forced to eat their remains. Israel Swan, along with Packer, was the last to die, and when his body was discovered showing signs of a struggle, Packer was arrested and charged with murder.

But he escaped, and when finally captured nine years later refused to confess. Now he claimed that one of the other men in the group, Shannon Bell, had attacked the others with a hatchet. Packer said he killed Bell and did indeed resort to cannibalism to survive. Sentenced to 40 years in prison in 1886, he received parole in 1901 and passed away in 1907 aged 65. As he lay dying he still proclaimed his innocence.



A locomotive travels through Marshall Pass shortly after its completion



A grizzly depiction of the bodies of the men who ventured into the San Juan Mountains with Packer

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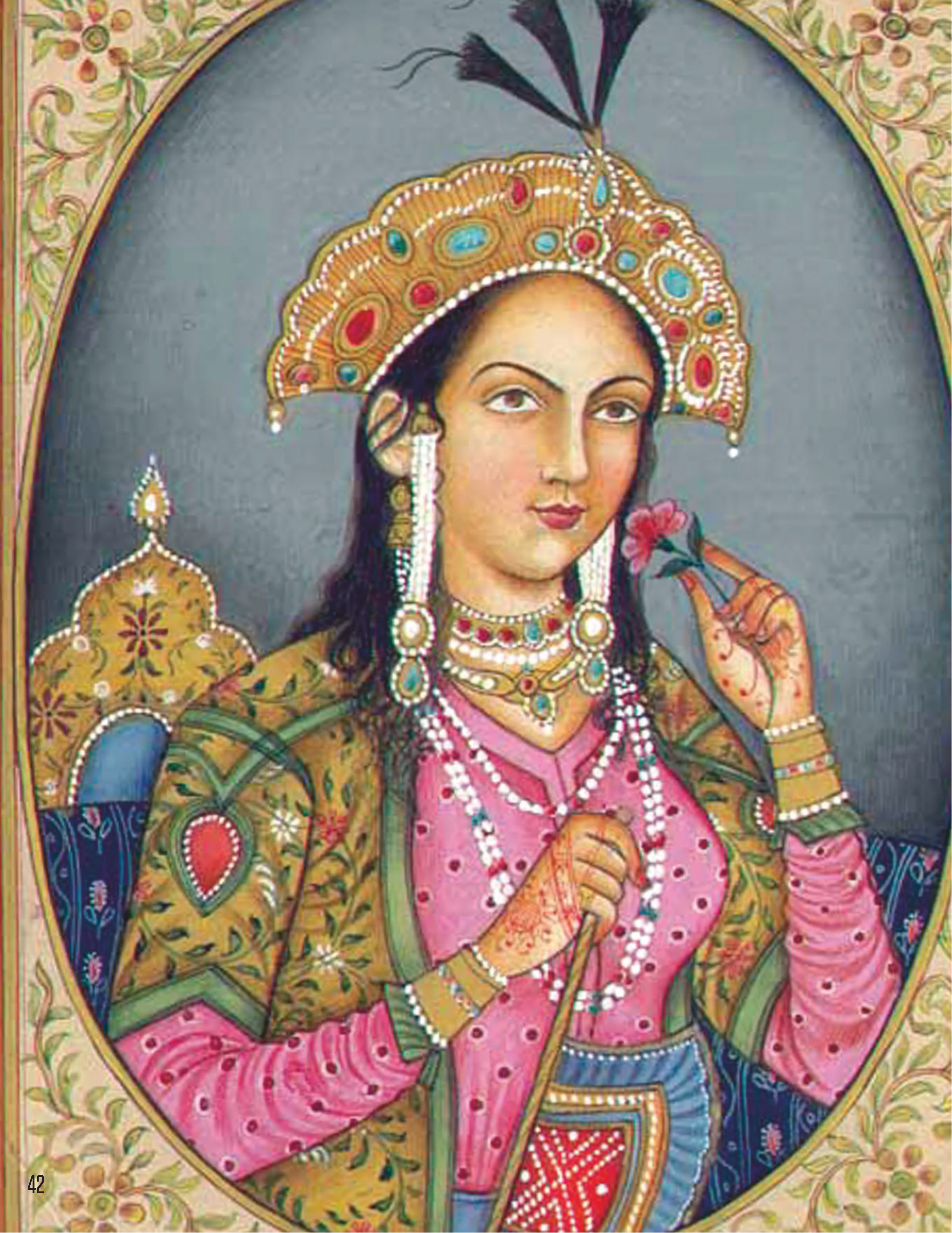

Mumtaz Mahal

Who was the empress that inspired India's most iconic landmark?

Written by Emily Staniforth

On the banks of the Yamuna River in the Indian city of Agra stands one of the world's most famous buildings. The white marble mausoleum of the Taj Mahal is visited by around eight million people every year, keen to see its beauty and grandeur for themselves. But how much do people really know about the powerful and devoted woman for whom the magnificent mausoleum was built?

Born in Agra in April 1593, Mumtaz Mahal was given the name Arjumand Banu Begum upon birth – the name she is better-known by was given to her much later in her life. Her father, Abu'l-Hasan Asaf Khan, was a wealthy Persian nobleman who occupied an important station within India's Mughal Empire (he would later become the chief minister). Her aunt – her father's sister – was Nur Jahan, who would become the favoured wife and powerful consort of Mughal Emperor Jahangir in 1620. Her grandfather was also an important figure in Mughal history, having been appointed grand vizier of the empire during the reign of Akbar the Great, who ruled over the Mughal Empire from 1556 to 1605.

As a member of such a well-connected and powerful family, young Mumtaz inevitably found herself in the company of India's most influential people. But little else is known about her childhood, and it was not until she was 14 years old that she first appeared with any significance in the historical records.

An imperial love story

The traditional tale of the defining moment of Mumtaz's life asserts that in 1607 a young Prince Khurram visited a local bazaar. The prince was the third son of Mughal Emperor Jahangir and, though he did not know it yet, he was destined for greatness. At the bazaar, he encountered the 14-year-old Mumtaz at one of the stalls. It was love at first sight and the young couple became completely enamoured with one another. They were soon engaged, but it would be five years before Mumtaz and Khurram made their vows because they were not permitted to marry until a date was decided upon by the court astrologers, who chose a date that they believed would ensure a long and happy marriage.

> "Khurram gave her the name Mumtaz Mahal, meaning 'Chosen One of the Palace'"

In the intervening years Khurram married someone else, but this was not unusual. The Mughal emperors practised polygamy and often had a number of wives and concubines. Khurram's first marriage (a political alliance) was to a Persian princess known as Kandahari Begum, and by the time he was eventually able to marry Mumtaz the prince and his first wife had already had a child together. Despite marrying another, the spark between Khurram and Mumtaz had not died and, according to all accounts, the couple were still deeply in love with one another when they finally wed in 1612. Khurram's love for his ▶

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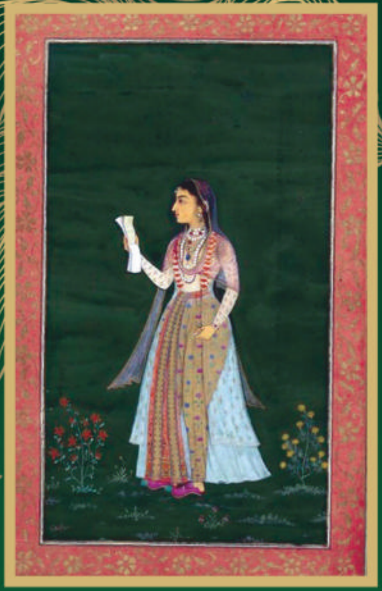
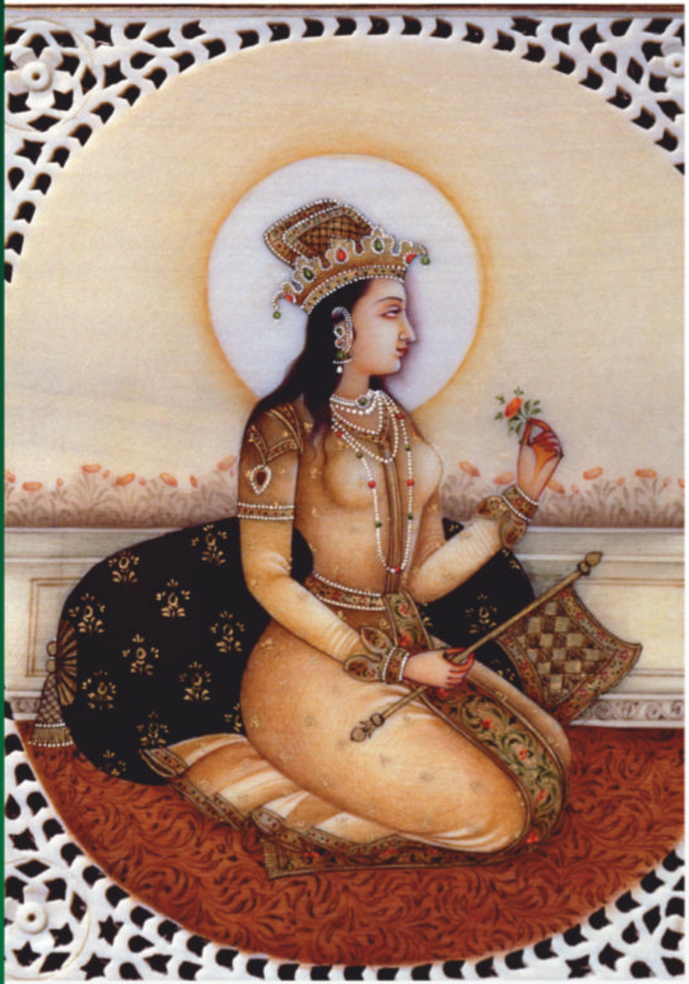


Jahanara Begum

After Mumtaz Mahal's death, her eldest daughter stepped into her shoes

The eldest surviving daughter of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan, Jahanara Begum, was unexpectedly thrust into a position of prominence upon the death of her mother. At the time, Jahanara was around 17 years old and became responsible for the wellbeing of her younger siblings, and also took on a caring role when it came to looking after her grieving father. Shah Jahan made Jahanara her mother's successor as Padshah Begum (First Lady), despite having other wives who could fill the position, and she became the most powerful woman in the Mughal Empire, taking over the duties previously held by Mumtaz. Jahanara and Shah Jahan worked well together, though their close relationship resulted in a number of unfounded rumours about an incestuous relationship.

In 1657, Shah Jahan's regime was overthrown by his son Aurangzeb, who besieged his father at the Agra Fort. Jahanara tried to make peace between the two and find a resolution but was unsuccessful. She later joined her father in the Agra Fort, where he spent the rest of his life under house arrest. After Shah Jahan's death in 1666, Jahanara was able to reconcile with Aurangzeb, who returned the title of Padshah Begum to her. As the empire's First Lady once again, she continued to be involved in politics and advised Aurangzeb as his sister and confidante.



ABOVE Mumtaz Mahal was said to be kind, compassionate and beautiful

ABOVE-RIGHT Shah Jahan was deeply in love with Mumtaz Mahal

RIGHT As empress, Mumtaz Mahal was gifted with wealth and luxuries

second wife is evidenced by the fact that shortly after their wedding he gave her the name Mumtaz Mahal, meaning 'Chosen One of the Palace'.

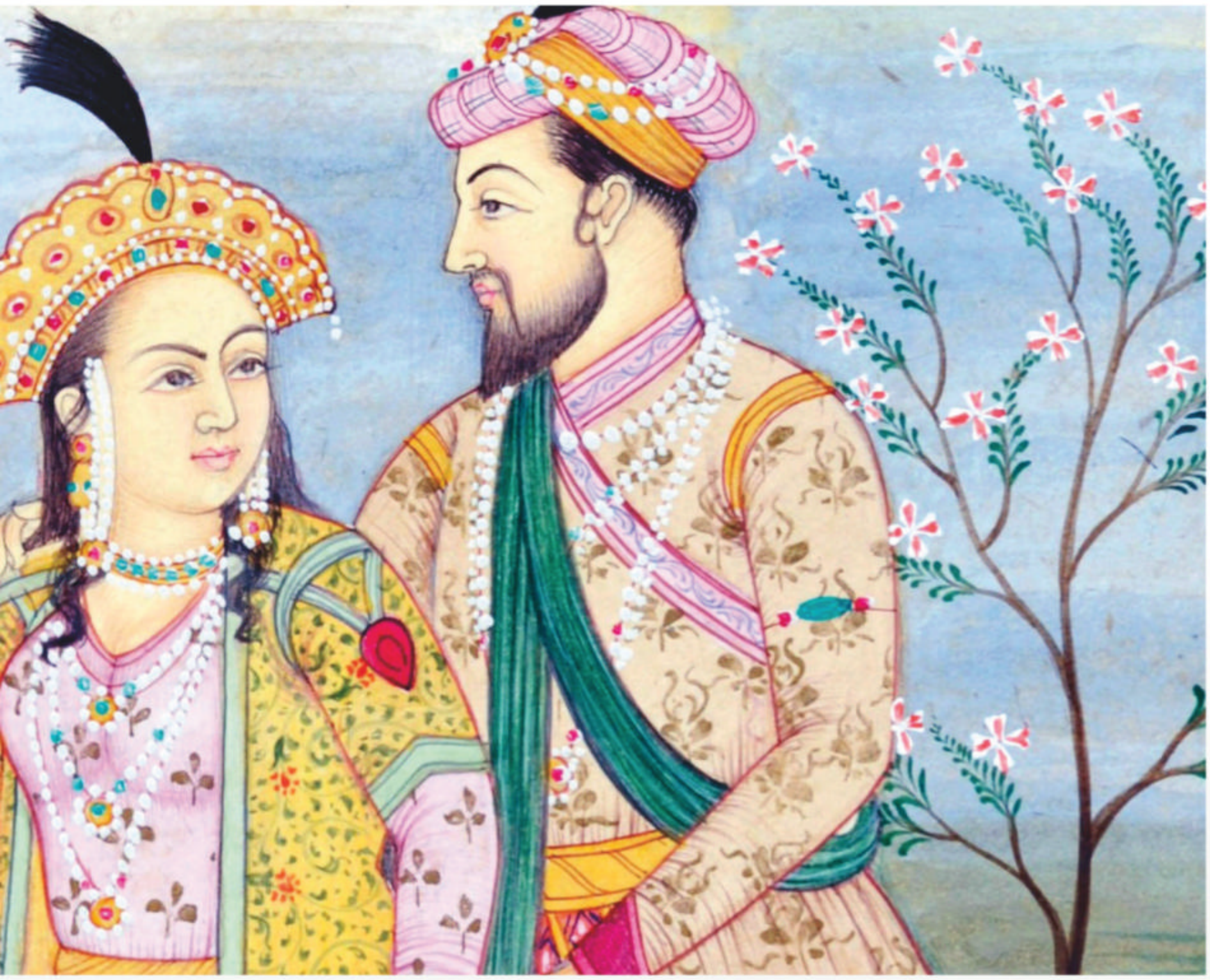
Khurram married a third time, to another Persian princess, but like his first wife she could not hope to receive the same love and respect that the prince had for Mumtaz. According to a chronicler at the Mughal court, Khurram's other wives "had nothing more than the status of marriage. The intimacy, deep affection, attention and favour which His Majesty had for the Cradle of Excellence [Mumtaz] exceeded by a thousand times what he felt for any other." The other wives only gave birth to one child each during their marriages, as was expected of the union. Mumtaz, on the other hand, had a total of 14 children with Khurram, though only half of them survived into adulthood.

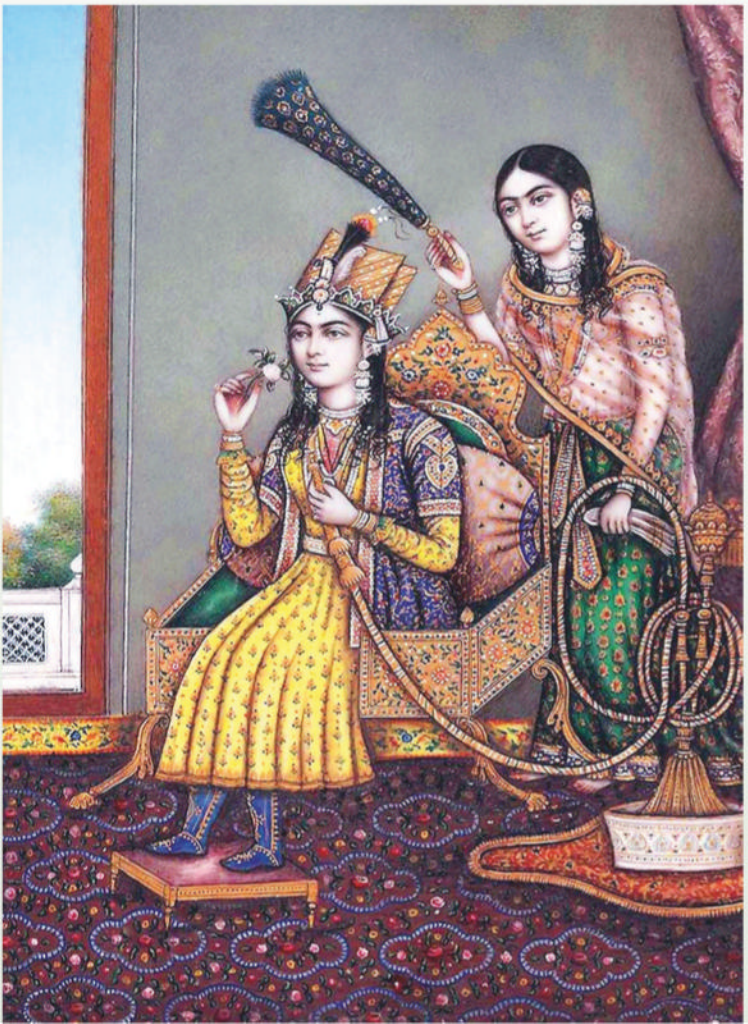
The Exalted One

Mumtaz played a critical role in her husband's life and aspirations. During the early years of their union, Khurram was frequently away on military campaigns and Mumtaz often accompanied him on these campaigns, despite the fact that she was often pregnant. This was not only extraordinary given her pregnancies, but also because the wives and concubines of Mughal royalty tended to remain within the confines of the harem. Her life, one devoted to being a pillar of love and strength for her beloved husband, allowed her to break out of the traditional constraints usually placed on women in her position.

> "Mumtaz's political agency was carried out discretely behind the scenes"

In 1622, Khurram decided to make a bid for the throne of the emperor and raised a rebellion against his father Jahangir and his wife Nur Jahan – Mumtaz's aunt. Nur Jahan had placed herself in opposition to Khurram when she decided to support another of Jahangir's sons, Shahryar Mirza, as the next claimant of the title of emperor. Sadly for Khurram, his rebellion was unsuccessful and he spent the next few years rudderless and out of favour. This must have been a





difficult time for Mumtaz, though we know little about how she may have felt about the situation. However, her devotion to her husband remained strong and in 1625 Khurram finally reconciled with his father.

By the time Emperor Jahangir died in 1627, tensions between Khurram and Nur Jahan continued to grow. But Khurram found support in his beloved wife and her father, Asaf Khan, who made political manoeuvres that ensured it was Khurram who succeeded the throne. Turning against his own sister and her wishes in favour of his daughter's husband, Asaf Khan's backing of Khurram went a long way to giving the prince the power to proclaim himself as the new Mughal emperor in early 1628. Upon his imperial accession, he took the name Shah Jahan, which translates from Persian to mean 'King of the World'.

With Shah Jahan's rise to power, Mumtaz's political status changed. She was no longer just the wife of one of the emperor's sons, she was the favourite wife of the leader of the Mughal Empire – an enormous, powerful state that encompassed most of the Indian subcontinent. As Shah Jahan's trusted confidante and consort, Mumtaz was placed in charge of the Uzuk, the Royal Seal of the Mughal Emperor. All correspondence and political paperwork was signed using the Uzuk, which remained in Mumtaz's care, meaning many official documents of the court were brought to her to seal. This responsibility was the pinnacle of all authorities the emperor could bestow upon a person. Unsurprisingly, Mumtaz was granted the title Padshah Begum, meaning 'First Lady', and became the Mughal empress.

Unlike her aunt, Nur Jahan, whose political influence in the court of her husband caused ructions and made her enemies, Mumtaz's political agency was carried out discreetly behind the scenes. She was an astute politician who was involved with matters of government and administration, and acted as an advisor for her husband. According to historical sources, Mumtaz was also incredibly compassionate and often impressed upon her husband the need for mercy and kindness when it came to dealing with his people. She supposedly encouraged Shah Jahan to commute a number of death sentences and exercise forgiveness. However, Mumtaz was also said to have a ruthless quality, one that was undoubtedly needed to remain the favourite wife of the emperor and to help keep her husband in his position. She remained at her husband's side as he set out to eliminate all those who posed a threat to his throne, offering support and advice.

Mumtaz also served as a patron of the arts during a time when art and architecture was flourishing in the Mughal Empire. She was granted a large allowance as empress and enjoyed many luxuries, commissioning poets and artists to create beautiful works. She was also heralded as an advocate for the poor and lowly of society, and made donations to charitable causes.

Court chroniclers paid a lot of attention to the relationship between Mumtaz and Shah Jahan, which tells us a lot about the status and importance of Mumtaz at the imperial court. She was undoubtedly a positive influence on her husband's early reign and inspired great affection from the people of the Mughal Empire.

A tragic death

Just a few years after Shah Jahan's accession to power, Mumtaz accompanied him on a military campaign in the Deccan Plateau.

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Features of the Taj Mahal

Some of the touches that make the iconic mausoleum complex so special

TOMBS

Inside the Taj Mahal are the ornately decorated cenotaphs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan. Mumtaz's tomb stands in the centre of the building's burial chamber upon a plinth and is decorated with calligraphy and flowers. Shah Jahan's cenotaph, installed much later, is larger than his wife's and situated next to hers. Their bodies are buried in a crypt below the chamber.

CALLIGRAPHY

Beautiful examples of calligraphy are present throughout the complex of the Taj Mahal. Some of the passages written in calligraphy in the mosque, main gate and guest house are verses from the *Quran* that were inlaid by master calligrapher Amanat Khan.

SYMMETRY

One of the most impressive aspects of the Taj Mahal is its symmetry. Each area of the mausoleum is a reflection of another and demonstrates the expert craftsmanship and design that went into building the structure. The exterior of the Taj Mahal has three symmetrical sides, though the side facing the Yamuna River is more elaborately decorated. This was deliberate as that side was used as the emperor's entrance as he approached the mausoleum by barge down the river.

MINARETS

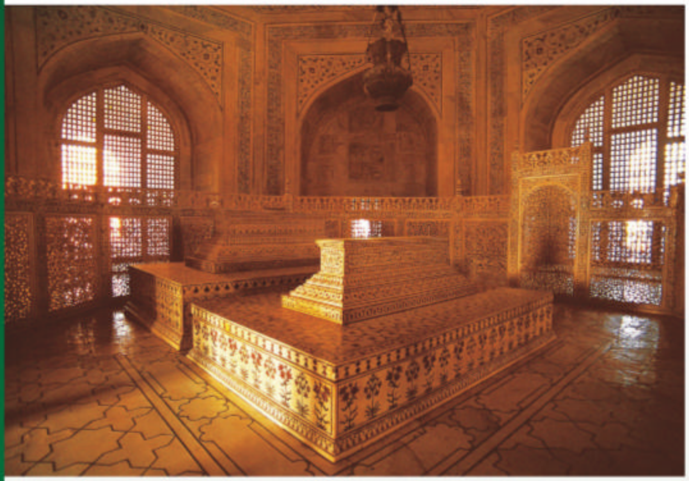
The tall minarets that surround the Taj Mahal add to the majesty and grandeur of the mausoleum building. Though they look to be perfectly upright, they are actually built to slightly lean away from the central structure. In the event of an earthquake, the minarets will topple away from the mausoleum and hopefully leave it unscathed.

She was pregnant with her 14th child and on 17 June 1631, after a long labour, the empress gave birth to a healthy daughter in the city of Burhanpur. However, the birth had not been easy and complications saw Mumtaz suffer from a postpartum haemorrhage. She died at the age of just 38. Accounts from chroniclers of the Mughal court describe how Shah Jahan was distraught at the death of his much-loved wife. One chronicler recorded that the emperor was not seen in public for a week after her passing, and when he next appeared his beard had turned white. A French traveller asserted of Shah Jahan's grief that "he was constant to her during life, and at death was so affected as nearly to follow her to her grave". The emperor had lost his closest friend, ally and confidante.

After her death, Mumtaz Mahal was buried in the garden of Zainabad in Burhanpur. This, however, was not to be her final resting place. Shah Jahan had greater plans to honour the woman who had stood by his side for so many years. At the end of 1631, Mumtaz's body was disinterred and transported in a golden coffin accompanied by thousands of soldiers. Mourners lined the streets to pay their respects to the beloved empress as her casket travelled the 900km back to Agra. Her body was then, once again, laid to rest in a temporary tomb. She would remain in this location before she was moved for a final time into a mausoleum that would come to be known the world over.

FAR-RIGHT The passionate, loving relationship between Shah Jahan and Mumtaz was celebrated by court chroniclers

BELOW The tombs of Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan inside the Taj Mahal



The Taj Mahal

After quelling the rebellion in the Deccan Plateau, Shah Jahan began making his plans for a magnificent mausoleum on the banks of the Yamuna River in Agra, close to the spot where Mumtaz Mahal's temporary grave was located. The emperor had a passion for architecture, and his reign was characterised by many magnificent building projects in what is considered to be a golden age for Mughal architecture. Construction on Mumtaz Mahal's mausoleum began in 1632 and

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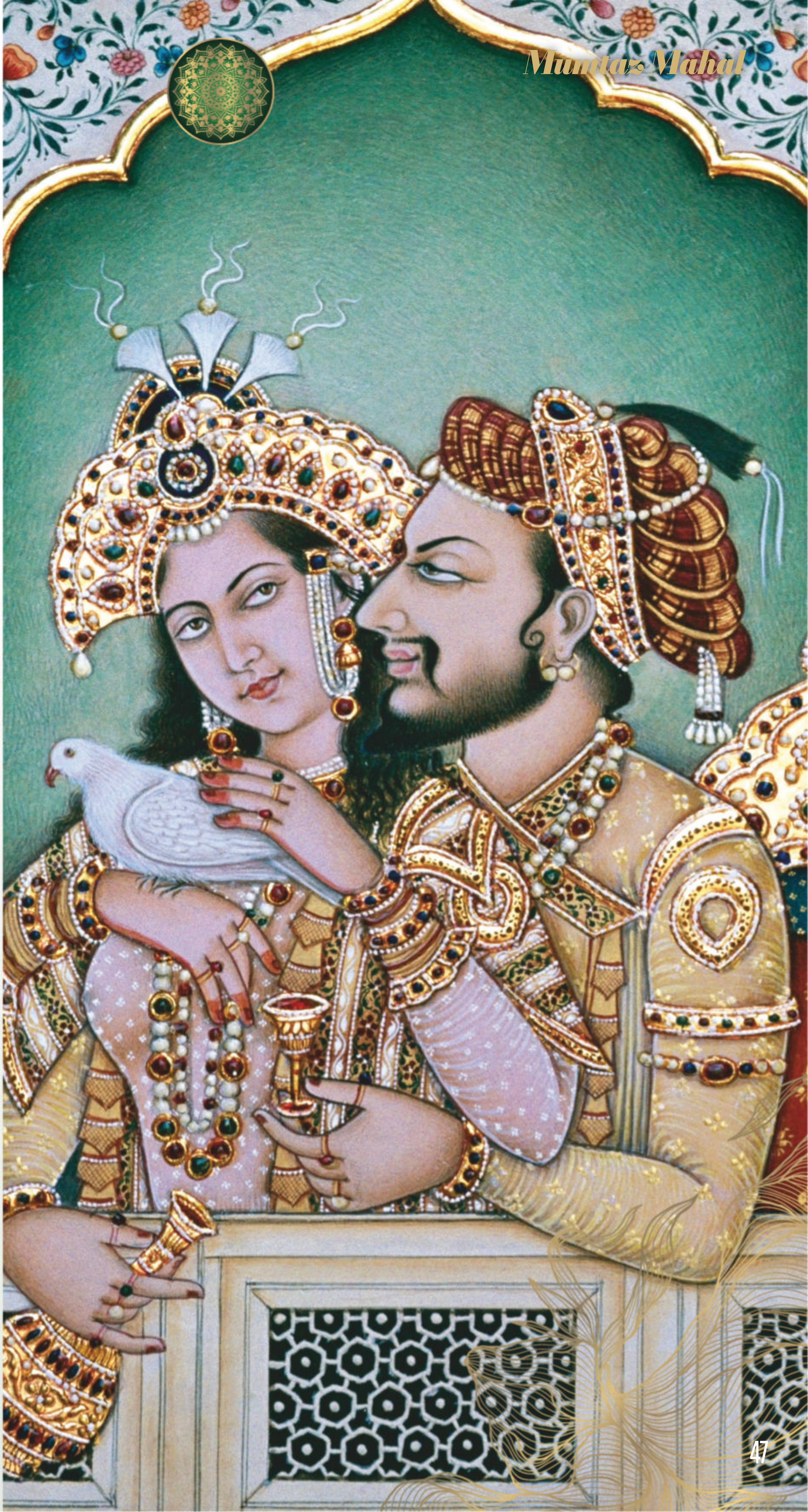
was finally completed in 1648. Shortly afterwards, it's believed her coffin was moved into the majestic white marble palace that her husband had devoted 16 years to building: the Taj Mahal.

But Shah Jahan was not finished with his creation quite yet. For another six years, the mausoleum complex was expanded to incorporate a mosque, courtyard, guesthouse and cloisters, and was surrounded by magnificent gardens. As the leader of one of the world's wealthiest empires, the emperor had the resources to dedicate to his project. Around 20,000 workers and craftsmen were involved in the construction of the Taj Mahal and no expense was spared on materials. It's estimated that the entire complex cost around 32 million rupees.

While the love story behind India's most iconic building has captured hearts around the world since its construction, the impressive scale and beauty of the Taj Mahal also did much to enhance Shah Jahan's status and legacy. In fact, some historians have suggested that while Mumtaz may have been the inspiration for the building, Shah Jahan would likely have built something similar regardless of her death. As a keen architect who prioritised new building projects throughout his reign, creating something on the scale of the Taj Mahal would have always been appealing to the emperor. He may have even intended the elaborate tomb to be his own, and upon his death in 1666 he was interred in the Taj Mahal next to Mumtaz.

> *"Mourners lined the streets to pay their respects to the beloved empress"*

It is possible that the records of the relationship between Mumtaz Mahal and Shah Jahan have been inflated over the years. The love story that inspired the building of such a beautiful structure is certainly a romantic notion that appeals to many and elevates the status of the Taj Mahal to another level. But it cannot be denied that without the Taj Mahal, the life of Mumtaz Mahal would likely be a minor footnote in history. Through the Taj Mahal and its continuing prominence in India's history and landscape, the memory of Mumtaz Mahal, a powerful and compassionate woman, has been eulogised forever in pristine white marble.



TUDOR REBELS

Uncover the revolts that could have toppled one of history's most famous dynasties

Written by Emily Staniforth

Between 1485 and 1603, the Tudor dynasty reigned supreme over England. Of the five Tudor monarchs who sat on the English throne, all faced the threat of usurpation and rebellion against their ever-changing political and religious policies that kept England in a state of constant flux. Here are just some of the most threatening and consequential revolts that kept the Tudors on their toes.

The Simnel Rebellion

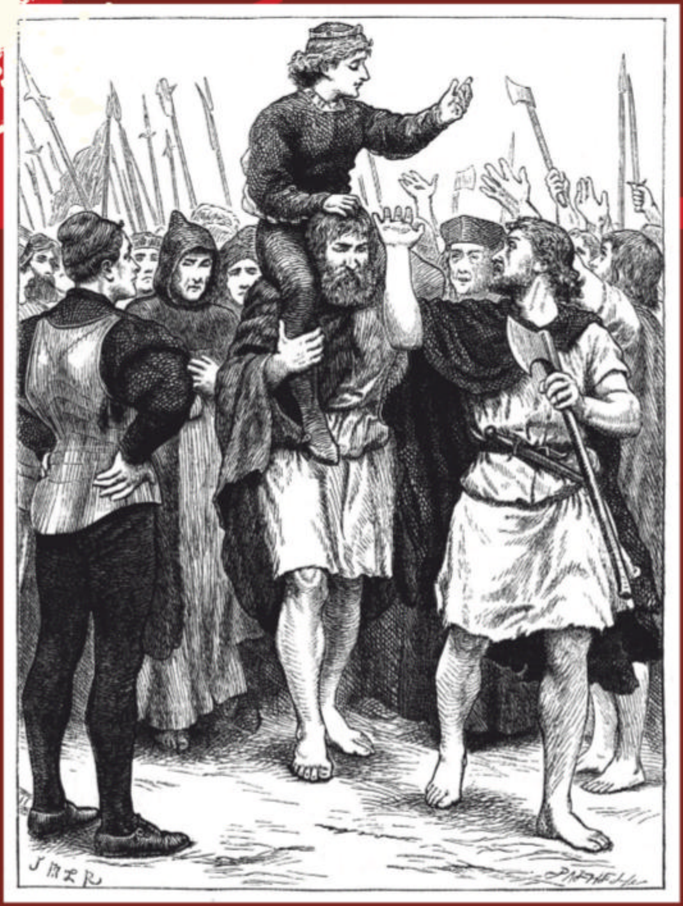
HENRY VII'S THRONE IS CHALLENGED BY A PRETENDER

JANUARY 1487 – JUNE 1487

When Henry Tudor won the final battle of the Wars of the Roses against the Lancastrians in 1485, it was always going to be a momentous task to consolidate his throne as the first Tudor king. His first major opposition came just two years after his victory at Bosworth, when a young boy claiming to be Edward, Earl of Warwick, began to garner support in Ireland. The boy's name is now believed to have been Lambert Simnel, though his identity has never been confirmed.

He was educated by the priest Richard Symonds who, seeing a resemblance between the young Simnel and the children of the late Plantagenet King Edward IV, hatched a plan to place the boy on the English throne as the rightful Lancastrian heir. But, upon hearing a rumour in 1487 that the Earl of Warwick (the nephew of both Edward IV and Richard III) had died in the Tower of London, Symonds changed his plan and began passing off Simnel as Warwick. Managing to convince enough people in Ireland, Simnel was crowned as King Edward VI in Dublin on 24 May 1487. Unfortunately for Simnel, Warwick was still very much alive.

Despite the actual Warwick's existence, Simnel's rebellion gained some high-profile supporters in Margaret of Burgundy, who paid 2,000 German mercenaries to fight for the cause; John de la Pole, the Earl of Lincoln and another nephew of Richard III; and Gerald Fitzgerald, the Earl of Kildare and Lord Deputy of Ireland. In June 1487, the rebel army landed in England and fought Tudor forces at the Battle of Stoke. The rebellion was defeated, with de la Pole killed on the battlefield. Simnel and Symonds were captured, with little known about what happened to the priest afterwards. For many of the rebels, Henry VII showed mercy and restraint in their punishment, particularly for poor Simnel, who the king recognised was merely a child who had been manipulated by those who opposed Tudor rule. Simnel was given a job in the royal kitchens, where he worked for the rest of his life.



"For many of the rebels, Henry VII showed mercy and restraint in their punishment"

The Warbeck Rebellion

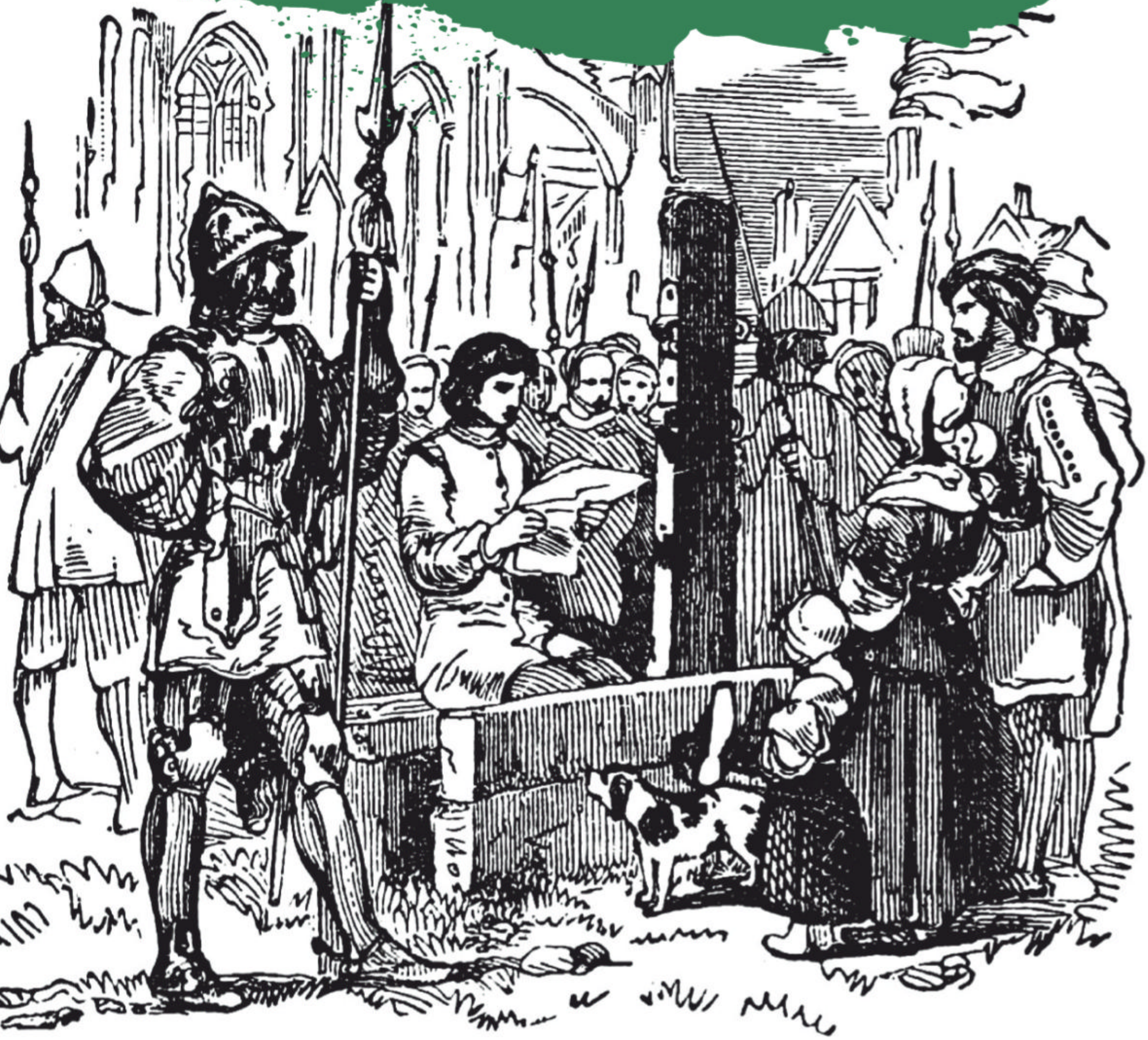
A PRETENDER GAINS SUPPORT IN EUROPE

NOVEMBER 1491 – OCTOBER 1497

In 1491, a young man started to make waves in Europe when he claimed that he was Richard, Duke of York, the son of Edward IV, who had disappeared from the Tower of London. His real name, however, was Perkin Warbeck from Flanders (modern day Belgium). After travelling to Cork, Ireland, for work in November 1491, and finding acceptance as the Duke of York, he started to be welcomed by European royalty who believed him to be the true heir to the English throne. Over the next few years, he was received and recognised by King Charles VIII of France, Margaret of Burgundy, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I and James IV of Scotland, the latter of whom even married Warbeck to his cousin, Lady Catherine Gordon.

Relations between England and Scotland were tense during this period, and the presence of Warbeck at the Scottish court did little to calm tensions. Henry VII threatened war if the Scots did not turn over the pretender. They did not comply but Warbeck, who had briefly attempted to face Henry's forces in 1495, took himself to England and landed in Cornwall in 1497. Garnering support from Cornish rebels, he swiftly amassed an army, before quickly losing his nerve and deserting his forces. He was subsequently captured by Henry's men in Hampshire.

Unfortunately for Warbeck, he was not shown the same mercy that Henry VII had displayed when dealing with Lambert Simnel. Perhaps because Warbeck had personally stirred rebellion, or perhaps because Henry viewed him as a more substantial threat than Simnel, Henry had Warbeck hanged at Tyburn on 23 November 1499.



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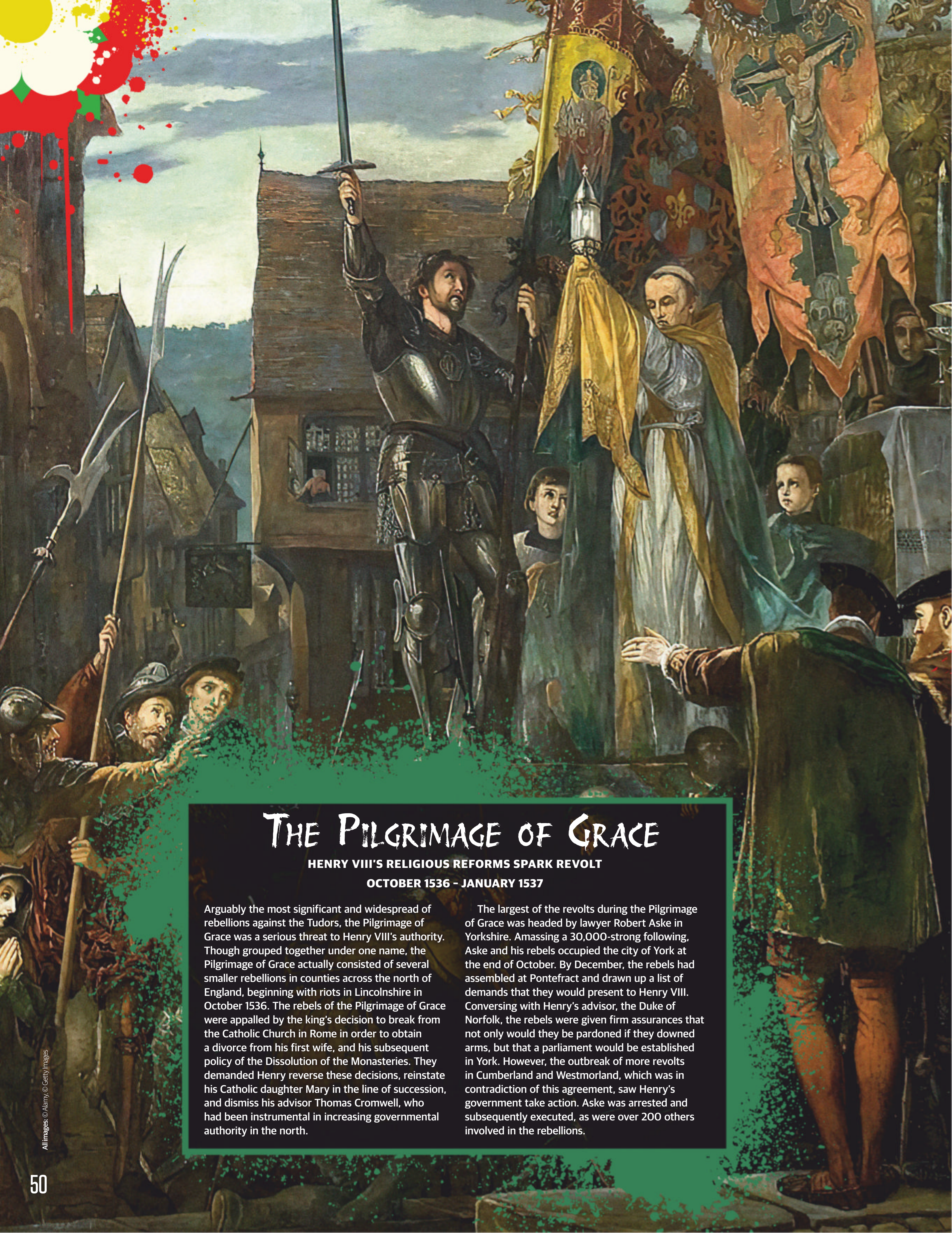

THE PILGRIMAGE OF GRACE

HENRY VIII'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS SPARK REVOLT

OCTOBER 1536 – JANUARY 1537

Arguably the most significant and widespread of rebellions against the Tudors, the Pilgrimage of Grace was a serious threat to Henry VIII's authority. Though grouped together under one name, the Pilgrimage of Grace actually consisted of several smaller rebellions in counties across the north of England, beginning with riots in Lincolnshire in October 1536. The rebels of the Pilgrimage of Grace were appalled by the king's decision to break from the Catholic Church in Rome in order to obtain a divorce from his first wife, and his subsequent policy of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. They demanded Henry reverse these decisions, reinstate his Catholic daughter Mary in the line of succession, and dismiss his advisor Thomas Cromwell, who had been instrumental in increasing governmental authority in the north.

The largest of the revolts during the Pilgrimage of Grace was headed by lawyer Robert Aske in Yorkshire. Amassing a 30,000-strong following, Aske and his rebels occupied the city of York at the end of October. By December, the rebels had assembled at Pontefract and drawn up a list of demands that they would present to Henry VIII. Conversing with Henry's advisor, the Duke of Norfolk, the rebels were given firm assurances that not only would they be pardoned if they downed arms, but that a parliament would be established in York. However, the outbreak of more revolts in Cumberland and Westmorland, which was in contradiction of this agreement, saw Henry's government take action. Aske was arrested and subsequently executed, as were over 200 others involved in the rebellions.

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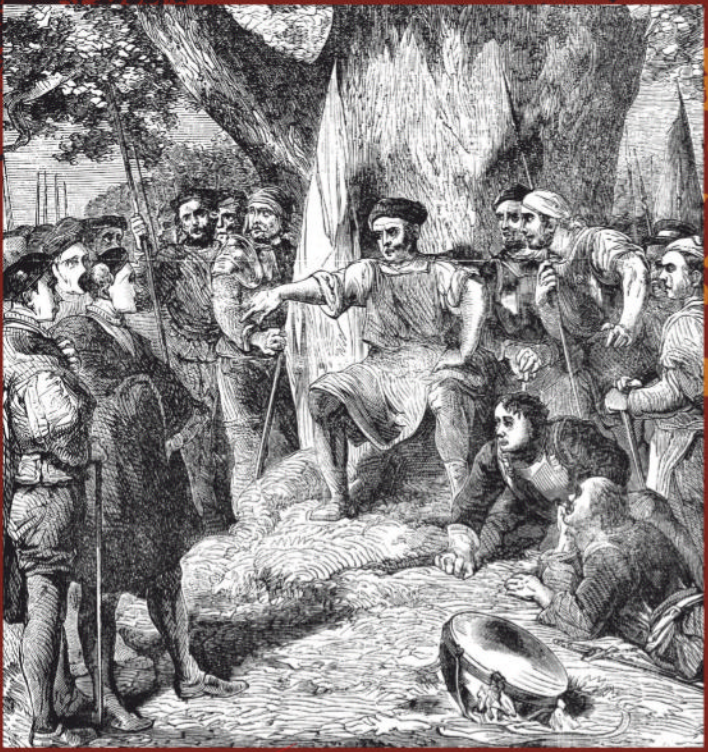


KETT'S REBELLION

THE POOR FIGHT BACK AGAINST ENCLOSURE

JULY 1549 – AUGUST 1549

In 1549, King Edward VI's enclosure policies had started to prove unpopular with the people of Norfolk. Enforced by the Duke of Somerset, the Lord Protector of England, who had been appointed to rule alongside the nine-year-old king upon his succession, the policies dictated the fencing off of common land, which would then be controlled by private landlords. For the poorer people of Tudor England who had farmed these lands for centuries, this was nothing short of a catastrophic blow. On 8 July 1549, rebels in Wymondham, Norfolk, fought back against the policy and began to tear down the fences that had been erected to enclose land in their area. Robert Kett, a local landowner, admitted he should not have put up the fences and offered to lead the rebels in their fight.

Marching 16km from Wymondham to Mousehold Heath just outside of Norwich, Kett gathered between 15,000 and 16,000 followers. The rebel army attempted to take the city of Norwich on 21 July but failed. The following day, they tried again and this time were successful in gaining control of England's second-largest city. Holding the city for a number of days, Kett and the rebels defeated an army led by the Marquess of Northampton, but were pushed out of the city by forces under the Earl of Warwick towards the end of August.

On 27 August, a battle at Dussindale stopped the rebellion, with thousands of rebels killed and Kett arrested. Kett was found guilty of treason and on 7 December 1549, was hanged from the walls of Norwich Castle.

WYATT'S REBELLION

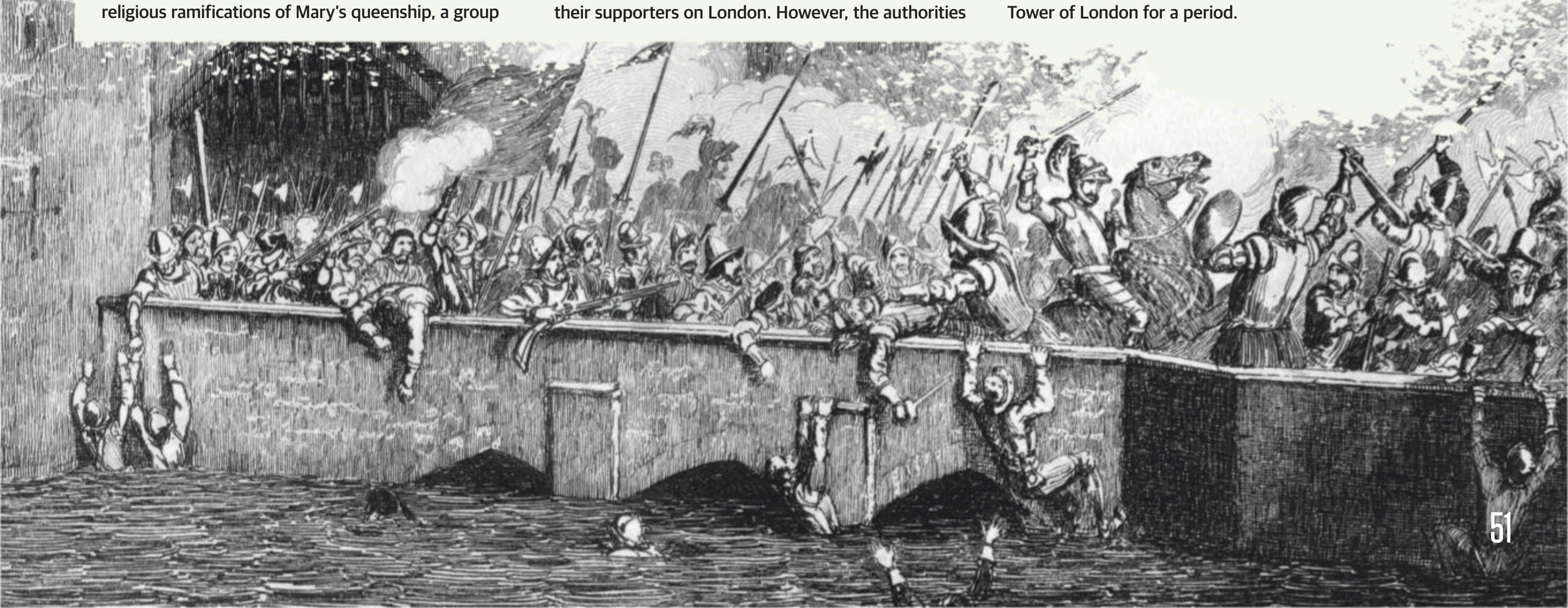
QUEEN MARY'S MARRIAGE FACED VIOLENT OPPOSITION

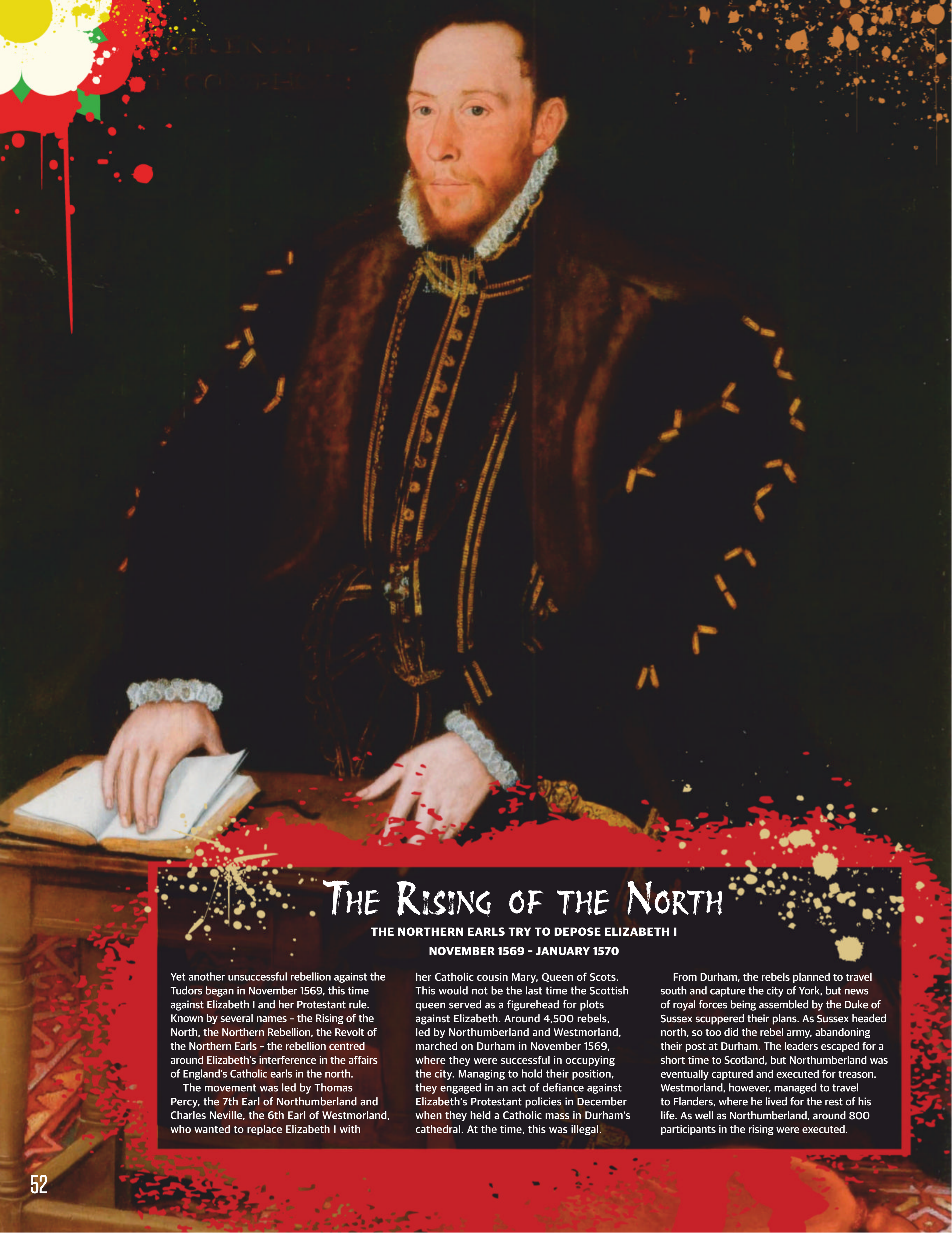
JANUARY 1554 – FEBRUARY 1554

When Mary I became Queen of England in July 1553, the people of England were in uncharted territory. Aside from the disastrously brief reign of Lady Jane Grey, who had been deposed by Mary, and arguably the medieval queenship of Matilda, England had never before been indisputably governed by a woman. Mary also posed a problem in that she was a devout Catholic, which after years of Protestant reform under Henry VIII and Edward VI foreshadowed huge religious changes for the English people.

By 1554, Mary's intentions to marry the Catholic Prince Philip, the future King Philip II of Spain, had become clear. Not prepared to accept the political and religious ramifications of Mary's queenship, a group of noblemen devised a plan. While the aims of their rebellion were never clarified, it is believed they wished to replace Mary with her half-sister, Elizabeth. The instigators of the rebellion included Henry Grey (Duke of Suffolk), James Croft, Edward Courtenay and Thomas Wyatt, the latter of whom the rebellion was later named after. It is possible that for one rebel the reason for revolt was revenge: Grey was the father of the deposed Lady Jane, who remained imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Each of the participants held power in their respective counties, and conspired to rouse anti-Marian sentiments in four areas before marching with their supporters on London. However, the authorities got wind of the plot and of the four planned uprisings, only one actually took place. In Kent, Wyatt amassed an army and travelled to London. On the way, Mary's delegates attempted to negotiate and stall him, but Wyatt refused to back down and arrived in the capital on 3 February 1554. Brief skirmishes broke out between Wyatt's army and Mary's forces, but eventually the rebels found themselves surrounded and Wyatt surrendered. In a great display of Mary's power and her desire to quell any further ambitions of rebellion in England, Mary executed around 200 usurpers (including Wyatt) as well as Lady Jane Grey. She also had her sister Elizabeth imprisoned in the Tower of London for a period.





The Rising of the North

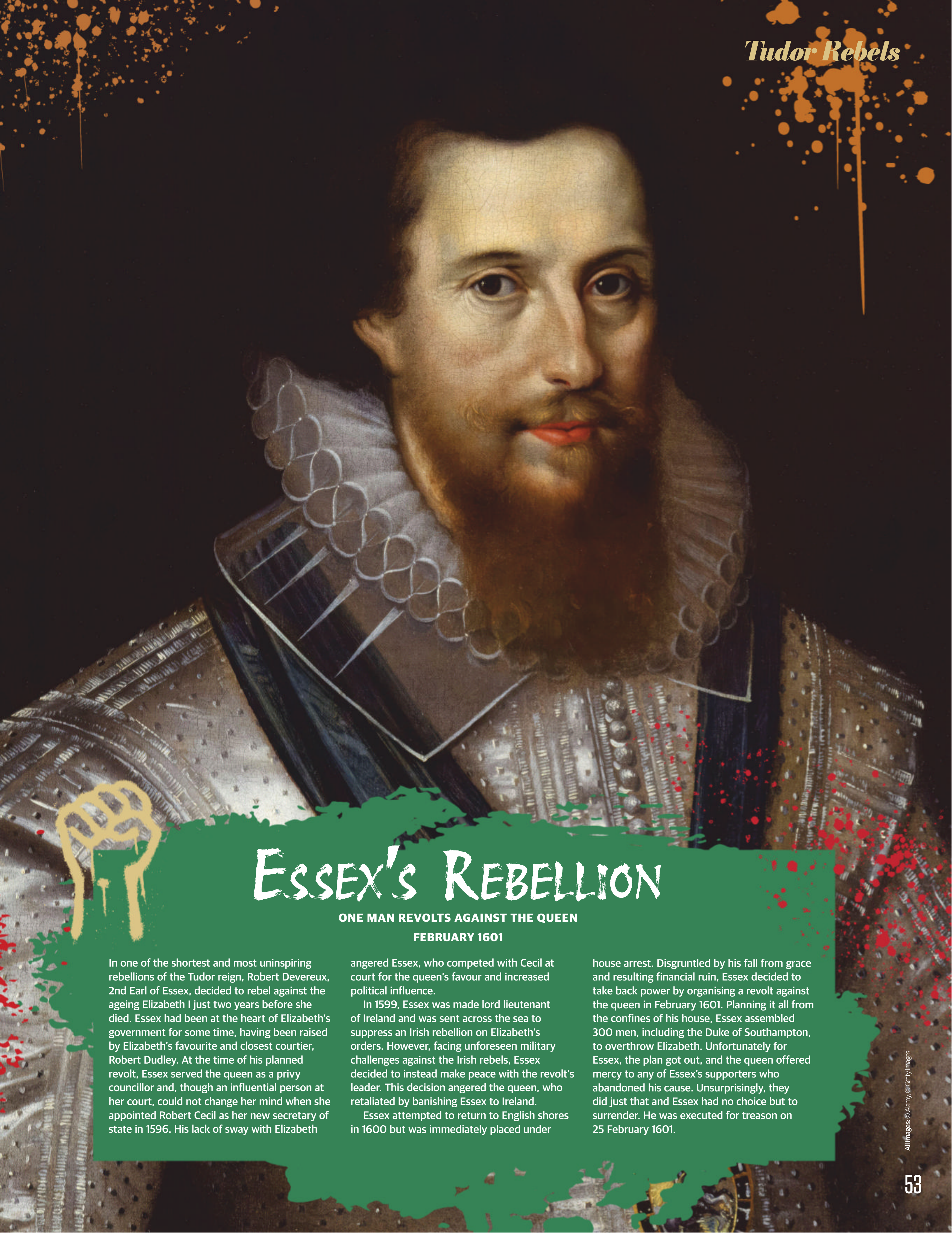
THE NORTHERN EARLS TRY TO DEPOSE ELIZABETH I

NOVEMBER 1569 – JANUARY 1570

Yet another unsuccessful rebellion against the Tudors began in November 1569, this time against Elizabeth I and her Protestant rule. Known by several names – the Rising of the North, the Northern Rebellion, the Revolt of the Northern Earls – the rebellion centred around Elizabeth's interference in the affairs of England's Catholic earls in the north.

The movement was led by Thomas Percy, the 7th Earl of Northumberland and Charles Neville, the 6th Earl of Westmorland, who wanted to replace Elizabeth I with her Catholic cousin Mary, Queen of Scots. This would not be the last time the Scottish queen served as a figurehead for plots against Elizabeth. Around 4,500 rebels, led by Northumberland and Westmorland, marched on Durham in November 1569, where they were successful in occupying the city. Managing to hold their position, they engaged in an act of defiance against Elizabeth's Protestant policies in December when they held a Catholic mass in Durham's cathedral. At the time, this was illegal.

From Durham, the rebels planned to travel south and capture the city of York, but news of royal forces being assembled by the Duke of Sussex scuppered their plans. As Sussex headed north, so too did the rebel army, abandoning their post at Durham. The leaders escaped for a short time to Scotland, but Northumberland was eventually captured and executed for treason. Westmorland, however, managed to travel to Flanders, where he lived for the rest of his life. As well as Northumberland, around 800 participants in the rising were executed.



Essex's Rebellion

ONE MAN REVOLTS AGAINST THE QUEEN

FEBRUARY 1601

In one of the shortest and most uninspiring rebellions of the Tudor reign, Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, decided to rebel against the ageing Elizabeth I just two years before she died. Essex had been at the heart of Elizabeth's government for some time, having been raised by Elizabeth's favourite and closest courtier, Robert Dudley. At the time of his planned revolt, Essex served the queen as a privy councillor and, though an influential person at her court, could not change her mind when she appointed Robert Cecil as her new secretary of state in 1596. His lack of sway with Elizabeth angered Essex, who competed with Cecil at court for the queen's favour and increased political influence.

In 1599, Essex was made lord lieutenant of Ireland and was sent across the sea to suppress an Irish rebellion on Elizabeth's orders. However, facing unforeseen military challenges against the Irish rebels, Essex decided to instead make peace with the revolt's leader. This decision angered the queen, who retaliated by banishing Essex to Ireland.

Essex attempted to return to English shores in 1600 but was immediately placed under house arrest. Disgruntled by his fall from grace and resulting financial ruin, Essex decided to take back power by organising a revolt against the queen in February 1601. Planning it all from the confines of his house, Essex assembled 300 men, including the Duke of Southampton, to overthrow Elizabeth. Unfortunately for Essex, the plan got out, and the queen offered mercy to any of Essex's supporters who abandoned his cause. Unsurprisingly, they did just that and Essex had no choice but to surrender. He was executed for treason on 25 February 1601.

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THE FORGOTTEN WAR

Sandwiched between the Second World War and the Vietnam War, the conflict in Korea is often overlooked in the West

Written by Callum McKelvie

The end of the Second World War witnessed the beginning of a new and terrible kind of global conflict. The Cold War pitted the opposing ideologies of the capitalist West, primarily the United States, against the communist Soviet Union. While the development of nuclear weapons caused the two sides to resist direct confrontation, numerous proxy wars were fought as each attempted to influence this volatile new world order.

By 1950, the Korean People's Army had been established with Kim Il Sung at its head. Advised by the Soviet Union, they invaded the south on 25 June 1950, leading to three years of bloody conflict. A number of United Nations countries (including the US and Britain) sent troops to assist the south.

The signing of the armistice on 27 July 1953 resulted in the division of the Korean Peninsula and the creation of North Korea and South Korea. But the war and its impact on the Korean people remain largely overlooked in Western history. Here, Richard Dannatt and Robert Lyman, co-authors of *Korea: War Without End*, talk to us about the 'forgotten war'.

What was the situation on the Korean Peninsula immediately after the Second World War?

The professed ambitions of the Allies immediately following the Second World War were merely to disarm and repatriate the Japanese. However, the motivations of both East and West in respect of Korea were in fact tragically divergent. [Joseph] Stalin had more expansive ideas about what to do with Korea, though he kept these secret from his rather naive Western interlocutors, most notably the US President Franklin D Roosevelt. In early August 1945, before the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Stalin had joined the war against Japan. On 10 August the 25th Soviet Army entered Korea and occupied the country down to Pyongyang. The Americans suggested that the US undertake the work to dismantle the Imperial Japanese Army below an arbitrary line drawn along the 38th Parallel, while the Soviets undertake that above this line.

Korean refugees in the ruins of Inchon, September 1950

EXPERT BIOS

RICHARD DANNATT

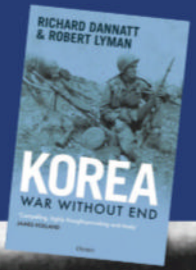
Lord Dannatt served in the British military for 40 years, including as chief of the General Staff, and was constable of the Tower of London between 2008 and 2016. He is the author of several books, including *Victory to Defeat: The British Army 1918-40*, also with Robert Lyman.

ROBERT LYMAN

Dr Lyman is a historian and author who served with the British Army for 20 years. He is an expert in military history, primarily focussing on the Second World War.

KOREA: WAR WITHOUT END

BY RICHARD DANNATT AND ROBERT LYMAN IS OUT ON 22 MAY FROM OSPREY PUBLISHING, PRICED £17.50



Headshots: Courtesy of Osprey Publishing

Negotiations to end the conflict - the armistice was signed on 27 July 1953

US soldiers celebrate the end of the war

All images: © Getty Images

ABOVE Around three million people were killed during the conflict, most of them civilians

RIGHT General Douglas MacArthur speaks to South Korean president Syngman Rhee

The problem for the West in 1945 was that after 35 years of Japanese colonialism there was no single publicly mandated Korean government-in-exile awaiting the Japanese departure, but a variety of noisy, fractious and squabbling groups all claiming the right to rule. The second was that the process of occupying the country and removing the Japanese was undertaken without any consideration for the deep political, social and economic undercurrents within the country. Korea's identity and culture had been erased by the Japanese. Civic administration, education, and law and order were all run by the Japanese, in Japanese. Koreans were forced to adapt to their new Japanese overlords, or rebel. Some did, especially those with Marxist leanings. Many decided to live with the new regime, hopeful that one day they could recover their country, but in the meantime kept their heads down. The communists dismissed these as 'collaborators.' Those Koreans who had fled the harshness of the Japanese regime – a proto-'Asia for the (Japanese) Asians' – to the USA were, on the whole, Christians and opposed to the communist guerrillas who had tended to stay behind. The leader of one of these exile groups was Yi Sung-man ('Syngman Rhee'). During the Second World War, Japan exploited Korea ruthlessly, pressing over five million Koreans into forced labour, in which one in ten died; sending 40,000 of its young men into its army; and forcing many tens of thousands of women to be prostitutes for the Imperial Japanese Army.

From the outset, the Soviets determined to model a client state from that piece of the country they possessed, separating it from the remainder of Korea. It perfectly suited Stalin's interests to have a client pseudo-state sandwiching Soviet Siberia and China. In the absence of effective government, many towns and villages across the country – north and south of the 38th Parallel – set up their own self-appointed committees to govern themselves in the absence of any alternative. In many of these, communist sympathisers took control. When central government attempted to reassert itself in the coming years, self-governing committees often opposed the new administrators imposed on them. Some looked to the communists in the North for leadership, rejecting that of the US military government or its successor in Seoul.

What was at stake politically for each of the parties involved?

Quite simply, the future of Korea. It was clear that the political fight in Korea was twofold. The first was unification of both sectors, administered respectively by the Soviets in the North and the Americans in the South. The second was a fight for polity. Was the new Korea to be run on Marxist or democratic/capitalist grounds? The North rapidly and ruthlessly formed itself into a disciplined single-party state; the South remained politically volatile, and the focus of relentless attempts in the years that followed to make the country communist.

> "While the Korean War may be forgotten by many outside its borders, its implications are profound and ongoing"

All this time massive population flows, mirroring those in Europe at the end of the war, kept society in a state of constant flux. By mid-1946 435,000 Japanese civilians and 180,000 soldiers had been repatriated, but Japanese civilians were still crossing the 38th Parallel from the North in 1947. Some two million Koreans returned home to both North and South following the Japanese surrender. By 1948 three million Koreans migrated from communist North to the non-communist South, voting with their feet against the new totalitarianism of the Eternal Leader Kim Il Sung.

To what degree had conditions for the Korean population changed by 1950?

By 1950 Korea had been long divided into North and South. The North had become a one-party state, a puppet of the Soviet Union and made in its image. The South was under assault internally by the forces of communist insurrection, fed by the North outside and by communist sympathisers within. By 1948 communist-inspired guerrilla warfare was rampant in the southern provinces of South Korea in what was effectively a civil war. The government responded by launching anti-guerrilla operations and imposing martial law. The trigger for much of the fighting was a refusal to accept the moves underway by the USA and the UN to recognise the independent Republic of Korea as the de jure government of Korea as a whole. This was bitterly opposed by those who desired unification of the country under the communist government of the North. Armed rebellion in the South was therefore regarded by Seoul to be an attack on the nascent ROK [Republic of Korea Army], and thus a challenge to the survival of an independent Korea free of communist interference. In putting down these brushfire rebellions, extreme brutality was often used, forever staining the reputation of Korean democracy and leaving a lasting bitterness on the psyche of the nation.

TOP Kim Il Sung ruled North Korea from 1948 until his death in 1994

ABOVE The Fatherland Liberation War Martyrs Cemetery in Pyongyang, North Korea

Meanwhile the communist government in the North had quickly established the active mechanisms of central power. These entailed the central clique (the North Korean Labour Party, led by carefully vetted functionaries endorsed by Moscow) in charge of making decisions and ordering affairs; the other allowed the people to believe that they held a share of 'people's power'.

What were the longer-term impacts of the war on the Korean people, besides the division of the peninsula?

The most obvious result has been an acceptance of a continued state of war in Korea, with a nuclear-armed North Korea standing over the South and refusing to accept the realities the battlefield forced upon it in July 1953, namely that it could not achieve the unification of the country on its own terms by the use of force. This has, of course, had an impact not merely on Korea but on the entire region, and indeed the whole East-West stand-off during the Cold War through to today. The Korean imbroglio has become the leitmotif of the war between capitalism and communism, a reality that the ROK, under the protection of the US nuclear umbrella, has been determined to demonstrate to the world. Under its form of representative democracy, as noisy and fractious as any in the West, the country has thrived economically, far better indeed than most of its Western role models.

As an early proxy conflict between Cold War superpowers, how did it set the tone for what was to come?

The Korean War is often cited as an archetype of a limited war, where both sides aimed to confine the conflict geographically and politically. This limited approach was a response to the catastrophic total wars of the previous decades. However, the scale of military engagement and civilian suffering challenges the notion of a truly limited conflict, as millions were involved in the fighting and many civilians lost their lives.

The war was characterised by its dual nature as both a civil conflict and a proxy war during the Cold War era. It involved not only the competing ideologies of communism and capitalism but also the internal power struggles within Korea. The UN forces, although legally justified, faced the challenge of expanding their military objectives beyond the initial goal of repelling the North Korean invasion, which led to unintended consequences, including significant Chinese intervention.

While both North and South Korea claimed victory, the true victor was the principle of international law and state sovereignty. The war highlighted the importance of maintaining national borders against aggressive expansionism, reminiscent of past conflicts. Despite the significant loss of life and destruction, the UN's intervention under US leadership preserved the concept of state sovereignty in the post-World War II order.

Likewise, the Korean War was the conflict that established the modern world security order. The Korean War established a framework for US foreign policy and military engagement in global conflicts. It marked a shift from isolationism to a proactive stance in containing communism and shaped NATO's future.

Why do you think the Korean War is often called the 'forgotten war'?

Primarily because it was hidden in the squall of proxy wars that engulfed the world as the Cold War reached its apogee. Perhaps the best answer to this question is that the Vietnam War which followed it a decade later so dominates the memory of American involvement in Asia that it has entirely dwarfed the Korean War, which had much wider Western and UN support.

What do you hope readers will take away from Korea: War Without End?

First, to be reminded that we mustn't be naive about what your opponent wants in war. Roosevelt invited the USSR to become involved in the war against Japan quite unnecessarily, uncomprehending as he was of the ultimate Soviet policy of creating buffer states to protect Mother Russia.

Second, the Korean War serves as a critical case study in the complexities of international conflict, the challenges of military intervention, and the importance of establishing clear political objectives at the outset. The notion of victory in war must encompass not just military success but also the attainment of sustainable peace, as demonstrated by the prolonged stalemate that followed the initial military successes of UN forces. The lessons for Ukraine are critical here.

Third, while the Korean War may be forgotten by many outside its borders, its implications are profound and ongoing, shaping the geopolitical landscape of East Asia and serving as a cautionary tale about the consequences of miscalculated military interventions and the enduring nature of unresolved conflicts. ○

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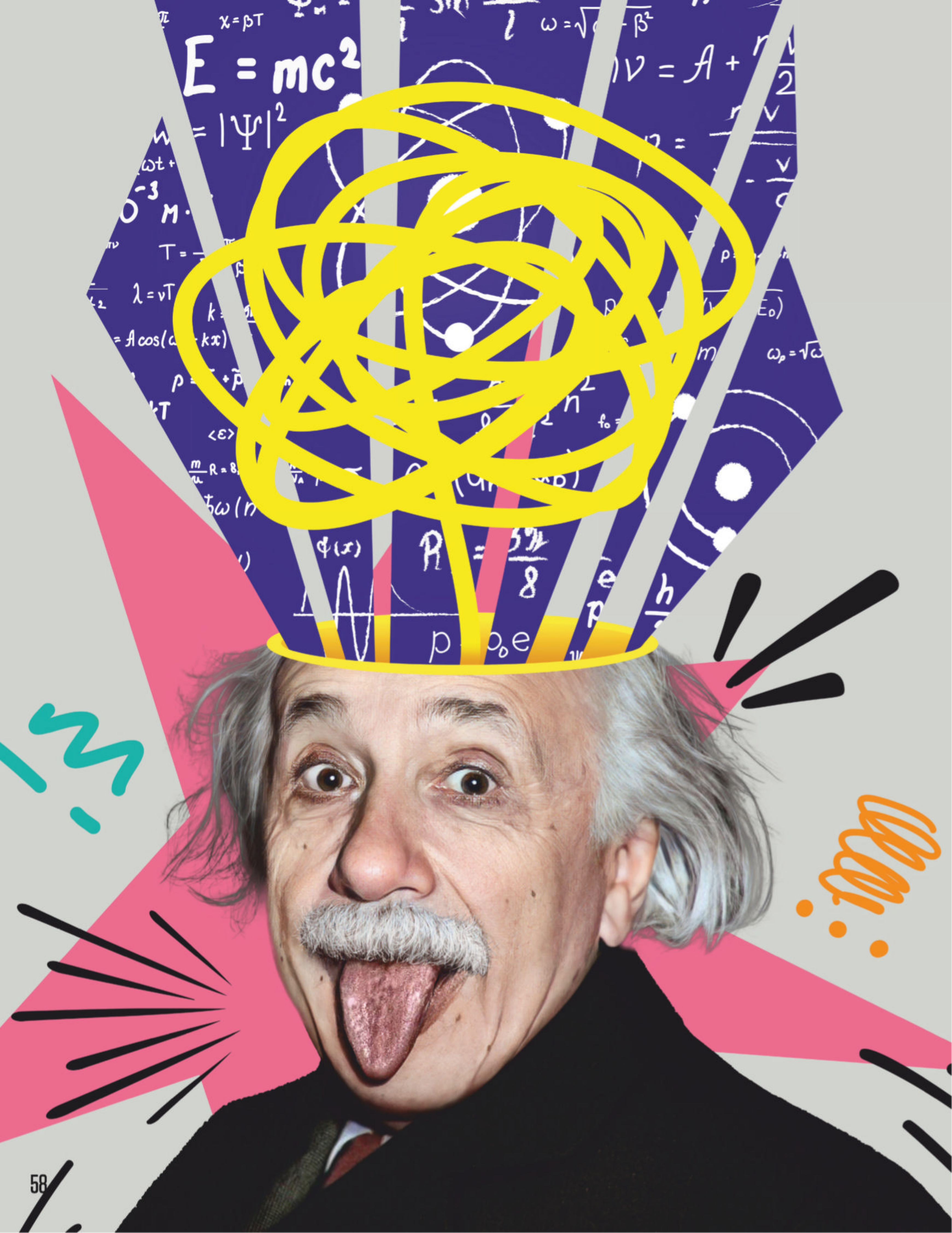
E = mc²
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LESSER-KNOWN INVENTIONS OF GREAT MINDS

INCREDIBLE IDEAS AND DEVICES THAT GOT LOST IN THE BRIGHT GLARE OF GENIUS

Written by Jonathan Gordon

Did you know Isaac Newton invented the cat flap? Well, actually he probably didn't, but it's an apocryphal story that's been passed around a fair amount. According to the tale, Newton cut holes in the door to his room at Cambridge University so he could work on experiments involving light without being disturbed by his cat. The basis of this story doesn't come from any records of Newton's but from holes in his Trinity College dorm room door that have long since been patched up. However, it's unclear if the dorm room was even his, when the holes were made or for what precise purpose. Still, this tale got us wondering: what are some real inventions by history's greatest minds that have been lost, forgotten or simply skipped over?

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

With the light bulb, phonograph, movie camera and many other famous inventions to his name, it may surprise you to learn that Thomas Edison's first patent was for a voting machine in 1869. The vote recorder was actually intended for use in Congressional meetings to allow elected officials to flip a switch to record their vote, which was then transmitted to the clerk and transferred to a piece of paper. It was a much more efficient way of conducting the business of state, although it didn't get taken up.

Another of the prolific inventors of the late 19th century was Maria Beasley, whose best-known contribution was a collapsible life raft, patented in 1882. This design went on to be massively influential on later rafts, including for the Titanic. Less well-known among her many patented ideas was a foot warmer. This small chamber with heaters and water was almost like an early concept for a steam-powered foot spa and was registered in 1878. It doesn't seem like it was ever produced, however. We're not sure we'd want to have our feet too close to a small steam engine either!

While Beasley sought additional comfort through mechanisation, Edison was joined by James Watt in seeking efficiency. Watt, one of the godfathers of the steam engine that helped propel the Industrial Revolution, also created the first copying machine. Bored with having to draw out and write copies of his work by hand, he created a device that used pressure to copy what he was writing or drawing onto a second surface. (Not dissimilar from the idea of carbon paper that came along a little while later.) In Watt's machine, which he patented in 1780, the print would be reversed, so translucent paper was needed.

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS

Would you believe that the first metal detector may have been invented to help locate a bullet in the chest of the president of the United States? Well, it's true. Alexander Graham Bell, best-known as the inventor of the telephone, created something he called the induction balance, which was an electromagnetic machine built following the shooting of President James Garfield on 2 July 1881. Bell believed his device could locate the bullet lodged in the president's body so it could be extracted, and he immediately began testing and refining his invention. Unfortunately the president's physician had identified the wrong side of the chest for the bullet, so the device was unable to find it. Garfield died of his wounds on 19 September 1881 and the doctor's mistake was discovered at the autopsy. Bell's device could have worked as intended, although its design is a little different from how metal detectors are made today. ▶

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JUST PLAIN WEIRD

Odd inventions that didn't take off

Illuminated tyres (1961)

Goodyear developed these tyres, using neothane, which was hard like plastic but stood up to wear like rubber. They were also translucent and tubeless, so 18 small lights could be mounted to the rims to illuminate the tyre.

Monowheel motorbike (1932)

There have been many attempts at making a single-wheel vehicle, such as this 1932 design called the Dynasphere. Created by Dr John Archibald Purves, it stands out as unique since it was big enough to hold two people.

Baby cage (1922)

It's hard to believe that this concept ever took off, but the theory that babies needed to be exposed to the elements to develop was prevalent. They became popular for a short time with families in apartment buildings.

Bed glasses (1936)

These Hamblin glasses were designed to allow people to read in bed even when their head was firmly horizontal on a pillow. They use mirrors, similar to a periscope, to allow the reader to see at a 90° angle.

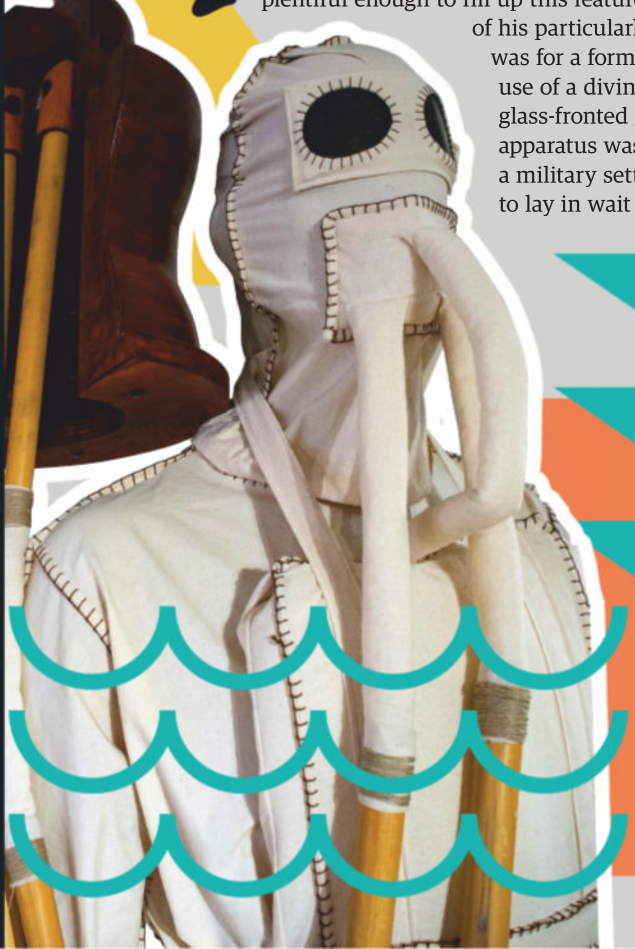
> "Bell believed his electromagnetic machine could help locate the bullet still lodged in the president's body"

Charles Babbage also made a foray into medical science, driven by his bad eyesight and his desire to understand it better. Babbage is a name we know fairly well today thanks to his creation of the analytical engine - the first programmable computer. As with that machine, another invention of his - the ophthalmoscope in 1847 - wasn't appreciated at the time either. This is a device commonly used today by opticians and ophthalmologists to examine eye health. Using a mirror and light applied to the eye, Babbage's device allowed ophthalmologist and physiologist Thomas Wharton Jones to look into an eye like never before, but neither man seemed to fully grasp the importance of the innovation. It took a streamlined version from physicist and physician Hermann von Helmholtz in 1850 to gain traction, and it is Helmholtz who is credited with the ophthalmoscope's invention.

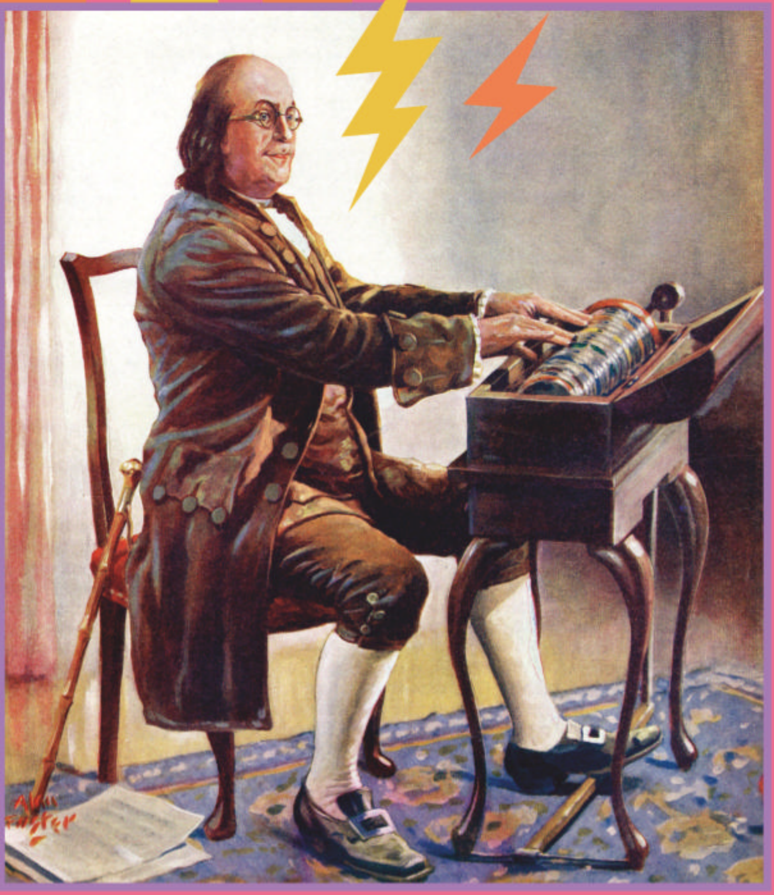
A modern great mind whose name you may not be familiar with is Flossie Wong-Staal. She was pivotal in the development of antiviral treatments for HIV and was the first person to clone the virus. This work allowed Wong-Staal and her team to map the genetic makeup of HIV, including how it managed to avoid the human immune system - a massive step in seeking treatments. And her work on something referred to as a 'molecular knife' is even less well-known; this is an enzyme that can hook into the molecular makeup of the virus and cut it apart, and in tests in 1992 it proved to be effective against blood cells containing HIV.

WATER WORKS

You might be surprised to learn how many great inventors turned their minds to matters concerning water and the sea, whether traversing its surface or exploring its depths. Take Leonardo da Vinci, for instance. His sketches and concepts are plentiful enough to fill up this feature on their own, but one of his particularly innovative concepts was for a form of diving suit. Making use of a diving bell to supply air, and glass-fronted goggles, this breathing apparatus was intended for use in a military setting, allowing divers to lay in wait and sabotage enemy



BELOW Da Vinci's diving suit design is more than a little intimidating



LEFT Franklin and his armonica

ABOVE Lemarr was an accomplished inventor as well as an acclaimed actress

ships from below. The leather suit would've even included a way for the diver to urinate so they could stay submerged for long periods.

Like Da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin was an inventor with a seemingly endless capacity for remarkable new ideas and innovations. As well as things like bifocal spectacles and the lightning rod, Franklin also explored the concept of hand paddles for swimmers. An avid swimmer since childhood, this was something of a passion project. The devices were oval pallets, with a hole for the thumb, to increase resistance when paddling – although Franklin acknowledged in his tests that this added resistance made his wrists tire quickly.

Sticking with a nautical theme, we can turn to Nikola Tesla, who did a lot of work in the field of radio-controlled devices. He debuted his developments in this area with a remote-controlled boat, about 1.22 metres long, at the Electrical Exhibition at Madison Square Garden in 1898. Tesla had applied for a patent for this technology in September 1897 but the examiners at the US Patent and Trademark Office weren't convinced of its veracity. However, the demonstration of a working model drone boat in New York helped to push the application through, and a patent was finally granted in March 1900.

Another interesting project that you may not know about from Alexander Graham Bell was an early example of hydrofoil watercraft, called the HD-4, or Hydrodome number 4. Developed with engineer Casey Baldwin and yacht designer Walter Pinaud, the vessel broke the world marine speed record in 1919 when it reached 114.04 km/h on Bras d'Or Lake in Nova Scotia. Hydrofoil technology had already been the focus of experimentation for some years, but this was a particularly impressive example, using a ladder foil system – a unique design that generates lift as water flows around it.

STRANGE, BUT TRUE

Can you name the inventor who developed a weapon concept alongside their other, rather more domestic, innovation of freezing fresh food for retail sale? Clarence Birdseye founded the General Seafoods Company after developing a fast-freezing technique to preserve perishable produce, but he had hundreds of other patents to his name. One of the most outlandish was a recoilless harpoon gun for hunting whales, which was a pastime Birdseye took up in his later years.

Another industrialist who developed something peculiar was the pioneer of mass-produced cars, Henry Ford. Inspired by George Washington Carver's research into industrial applications for plants such as peanuts and soybeans, Ford set about creating a vehicle that made use of unconventional materials. In 1941 he unveiled a plastic-bodied vehicle built on a tubular steel frame – the plastic was made from soybean fibre. This 'soybean car' weighed about 900kg, around 450kg less than the steel-bodied cars Ford had been making. However, his groundbreaking design never went into production as America's entry into the Second World War in December 1941 interrupted manufacturing plans.

BELOW Tesla had a number of remarkable inventions that didn't gain attention in their time

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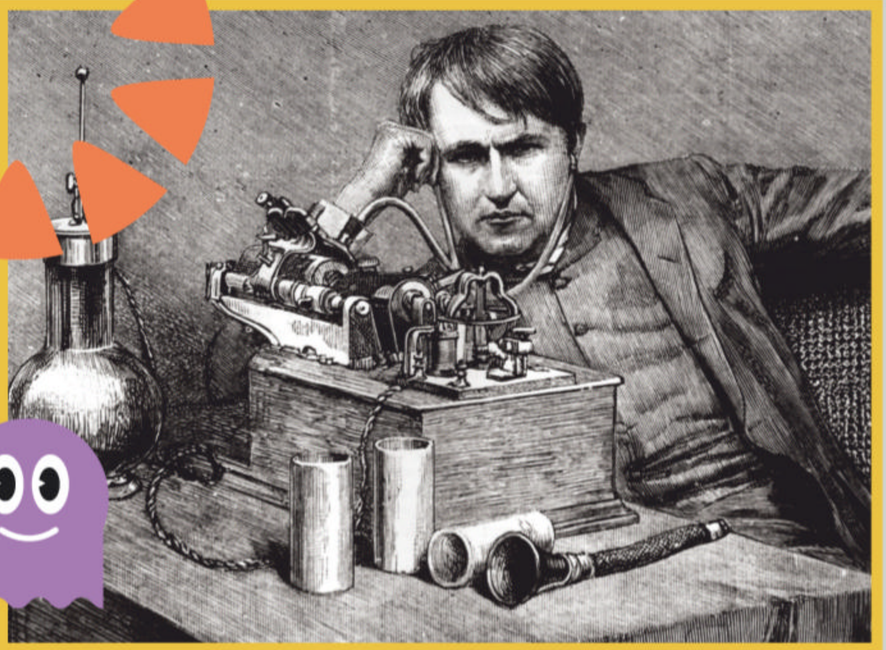
DEARBORN
MICH. 8-13 1941

ABOVE Ford's 'soybean car'

Someone who sought to help the war effort with her work was famous Vienna-born Hollywood star Hedy Lamarr, who developed a radio guidance system for the US military during WWII. Her design formed the basis of Bluetooth technology and is similar to how Wi-Fi signals are transmitted today. But that wasn't the end of her scientific contributions. One of the most intriguing was a tablet that would dissolve in water to create a carbonated beverage, like an instant soda-maker. Alas, this idea didn't manage to attract investors.

Neither did another of Nikola Tesla's concepts, although it was a design that would bear fruit in later years. Today we're familiar with what's called a tiltrotor aircraft, such as the V-22 Osprey, which is able to take off vertically with its rotors positioned horizontal to the ground like a helicopter, then rotate them 90° to begin moving forward like a plane. About 60 years before the Osprey, a patent was published by Tesla for a helicopter plane that was built along similar lines. His version of the aircraft was a lot smaller than modern iterations (its two wings would be about 2.5m^2) but made use of a turbine to drive power to the single rotor and achieve a vertical takeoff. In his version the whole craft would rotate to move the rotor into a forward position, but the pilot and passenger seats were suspended in such a way that they would always be upright. It was never made and there's some doubt it would have worked, but Tesla's incorporation of a turbine engine proved to be essential for later aircraft in this field.

BELOW It doesn't seem that Edison was able to contact the other side



Leonardo da Vinci, like Tesla, drafted lots of designs that didn't get made in their time but later proved to be influential. Some seem oddly similar to modern machines and mechanisms that would have been implausible for his own time. One that sits nicely in this realm is his robotic knight design. This automatic suit of armour was moved through the use of pulleys, weights and gears to sit and stand, turn its head and open its visor, a little like an automaton. It's possible he even built one for an exhibition around the time he sketched it in 1495. The design was discovered in 1957 and in 2002 robotics expert Mark Rosheim built a replica following Da Vinci's instructions, discovering that it worked exactly as described. It's another remarkable credit to add to the polymath's name.

Benjamin Franklin, on the other hand, actually had some success with one of his stranger inventions, but it proved to be short-lived. The device was an instrument called the glass armonica. Inspired by a performance of a musician using wine glasses to create a resonant sound, in 1761 he created a more contained version into a single instrument. Developed with the help of a London glassblower, it consisted of several glass bowls tuned to specific notes, separated by cork and mounted in a rod that would rotate inside a case. Franklin's creation was immediately lauded and even had music composed for it by Beethoven and Mozart. However, superstitions grew around the armonica that it caused hallucinations and even madness, and it declined in popularity, although Franklin continued to enjoy it in his old age.

> "Edison hoped his device would allow us to detect and then communicate with the spirits of the dead"

Speaking of superstitions, we really should mention Thomas Edison's 'spirit phone'. As the inventor himself told *Forbes* magazine in 1920: "I have been at work for some time building an apparatus to see if it is possible for personalities which have left this earth to communicate with us." He asserted that questions put to ghosts and spirits would be answered through science rather than mediums. He hoped his device would allow us to detect and then communicate with the spirits of the dead, but no prototype of the machine was ever found.

Unlike inventors such as Edison, who made their living by concocting ideas and patenting them, Albert Einstein's great contributions to science and the world came through his theories and mathematical work. That work, in turn, was instrumental in a number of important inventions, such as satellite navigation. However, he did have a job in a patent office for several years and he does have a curious patent to his name from 1936, a few months after he had successfully emigrated to the United States from Nazi-controlled Germany. The invention, named as a 'blouse', is an expandable jacket with two sets of buttons allowing the garment to hold a similar shape while making more room around the midriff. An ideal garment for wearing out for dinner, perhaps? It doesn't appear that a prototype was ever manufactured, but it may well have looked quite snazzy.

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Men of the II Colonial Corps launch a second wave of attacks, while in the distance the first wave reaches the German outpost trenches on the Chemin des Dames

Greatest Battles

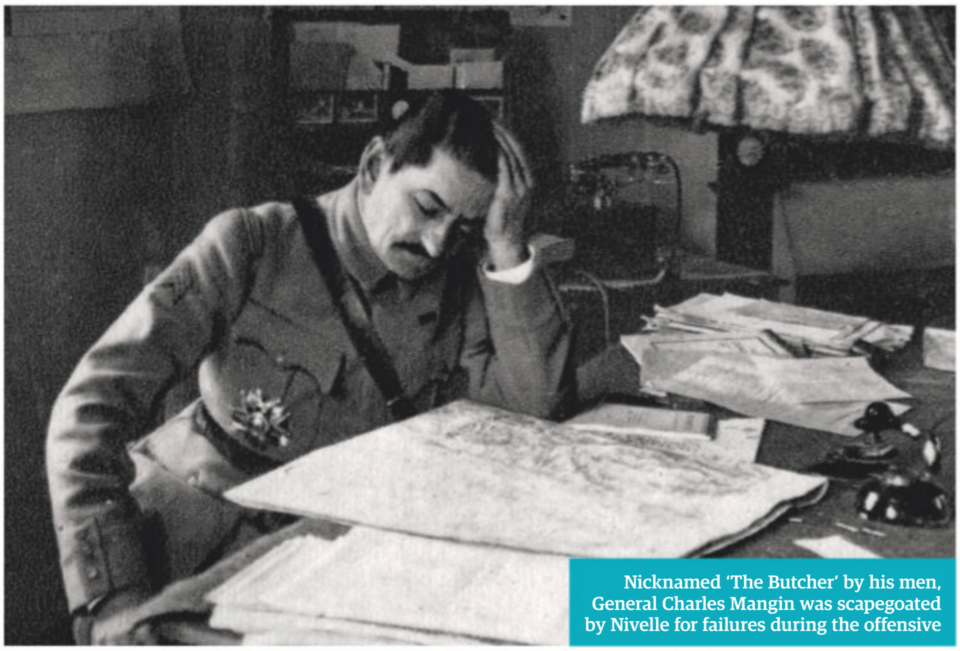
NIVELLE OFFENSIVE

CHEMIN DES DAMES, FRANCE
16 APRIL – 9 MAY 1917

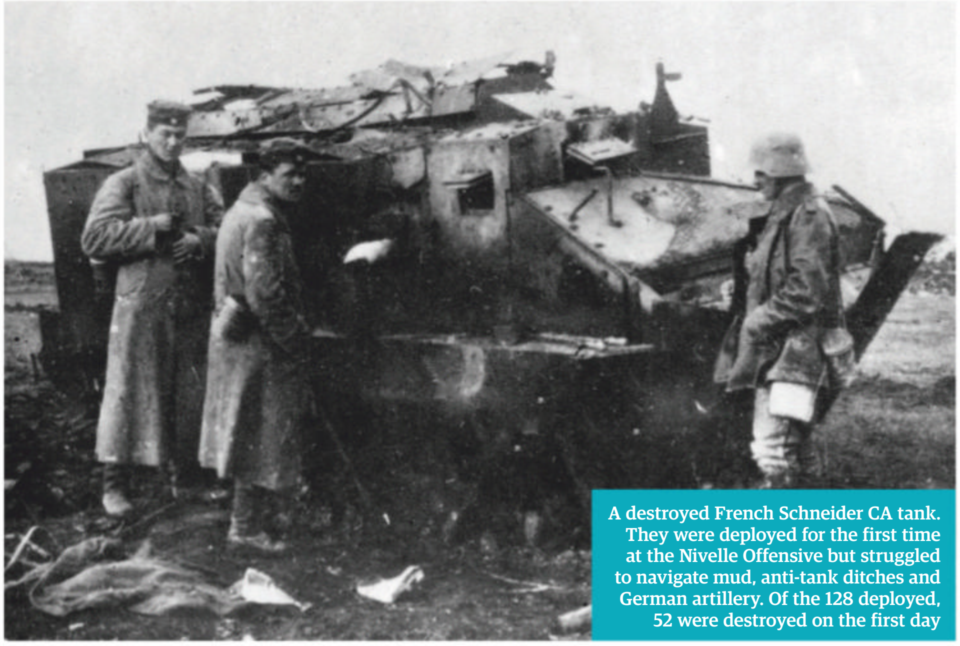
Written by Louis Hardiman

On a cold night in January 1917, German infantry launched a raid at Main de Massiges, east of Reims, and came across enemy plans to attack the Aisne River. General Erich Ludendorff declared it a "capital piece of information". The Germans' alarm grew after another raid in March 1917 led to the discovery of French General Robert Nivelle's "Instructions Concerning the Aim and Conditions of a General Offensive", revealing the planned operation's incredible scale. Despite these disastrous leaks, Nivelle continued widely circulating operational plans. The dam of his secrecy ultimately burst open with the capture of a sergeant carrying a document detailing the movements of specific units.

That is not to say that Nivelle ever seriously tried to protect intelligence on the offensive. While lobbying for support, he showed the press and politicians his ambition and promised



Nicknamed 'The Butcher' by his men, General Charles Mangin was scapegoated by Nivelle for failures during the offensive



A destroyed French Schneider CA tank. They were deployed for the first time at the Nivelle Offensive but struggled to navigate mud, anti-tank ditches and German artillery. Of the 128 deployed, 52 were destroyed on the first day

a breakthrough within 48 hours. The press and the Chamber of Deputies then publicly debated aspects of his proposal. It was said every waiter in Paris knew about the coming action. Yet Nivelle's openness with the French political and media establishment made his rise to commander-in-chief possible. The French needed a charismatic and politically acceptable alternative to General Joseph Joffre, who had resisted any attempts from politicians to interfere in military matters.

Nivelle wasn't just an effective lobbyist, he was also a respected general who had cut his teeth at Verdun in 1916. There, he had ended localised stalemates by deploying overwhelming violence concentrated on weak points in the enemy line. By removing the need to attack along the whole front, Nivelle hoped to bring to an end the long, grinding battles that defined the Western Front. Nivelle's offensive began to take shape as he implemented his Verdun tactics on a larger scale at the front, between the bastions of Soissons and Reims.

He chose the Chemin des Dames as the site for the battle, a road hugging the plateau north of the Aisne River. The ancient route had been paved by King Louis XV so his daughter could visit one of her ladies-in-waiting, and it had been the site of a critical battle during another invasion of France in 1814. Located 100km from Paris, it naturally blocked the most direct route to the capital. The sector had been quiet since 1914 and Nivelle hoped to stretch its relatively small defensive force through Allied diversionary attacks elsewhere. These were primarily at Vimy Ridge and Arras from the British and Canadian forces, and Nivelle was pushing for further attacks from the Russians and Italians. Then, his 52 divisions and 7,000 big guns could smash through the German lines, advancing 10km each day, bringing the stalemate on the Western Front to a victorious conclusion. Convinced his triumph was inevitable, he promised "a splendid harvest of glory for the British and French armies".

DEFENCE IN DEPTH

By April 1917, Nivelle's masterstroke tactic at Verdun was already outdated, designed to exploit the German Army's tactic of deploying a single, 'unbreakable' line, with no room for withdrawal and within range of French artillery. In response, Ludendorff published *The Principles of Command in the Defensive Battle in Position Warfare*, which detailed the defence in depth doctrine.

Anticipating Nivelle's tactic at Chemin des Dames, Ludendorff ordered his forces to pull back to the Hindenburg Line, leaving only an 'outpost' sector within range of French artillery. It was just 1km deep and loosely defended to reduce casualties. Ludendorff commanded these outpost defenders

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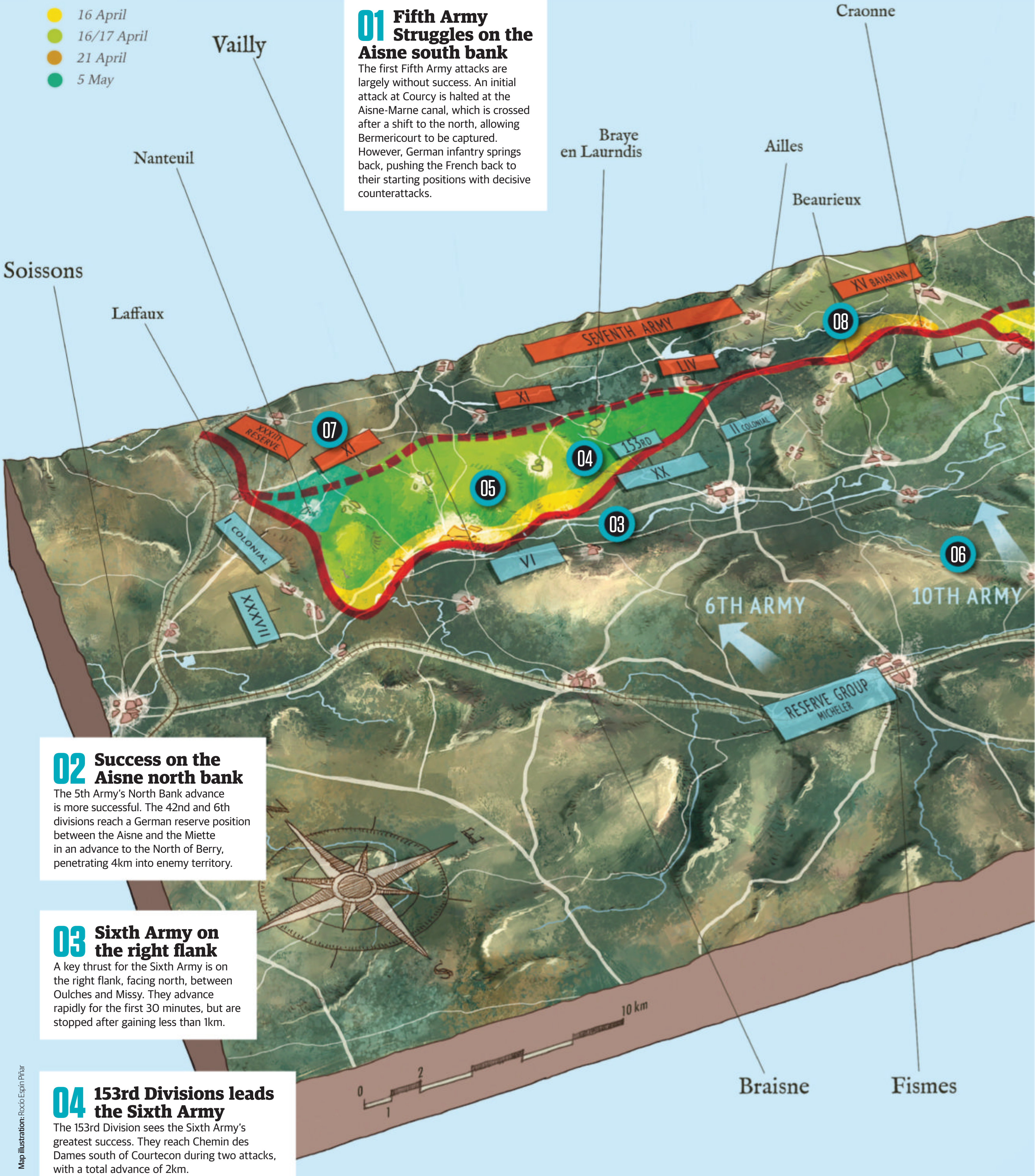
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● 16/17 April
● 21 April
● 5 May
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Braye en Laurndis
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Beaurieux
Soissons
Laffaux
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01 Fifth Army Struggles on the Aisne south bank

The first Fifth Army attacks are largely without success. An initial attack at Courcy is halted at the Aisne-Marne canal, which is crossed after a shift to the north, allowing Bermericourt to be captured. However, German infantry springs back, pushing the French back to their starting positions with decisive counterattacks.

02 Success on the Aisne north bank

The 5th Army's North Bank advance is more successful. The 42nd and 6th divisions reach a German reserve position between the Aisne and the Miette in an advance to the North of Berry, penetrating 4km into enemy territory.

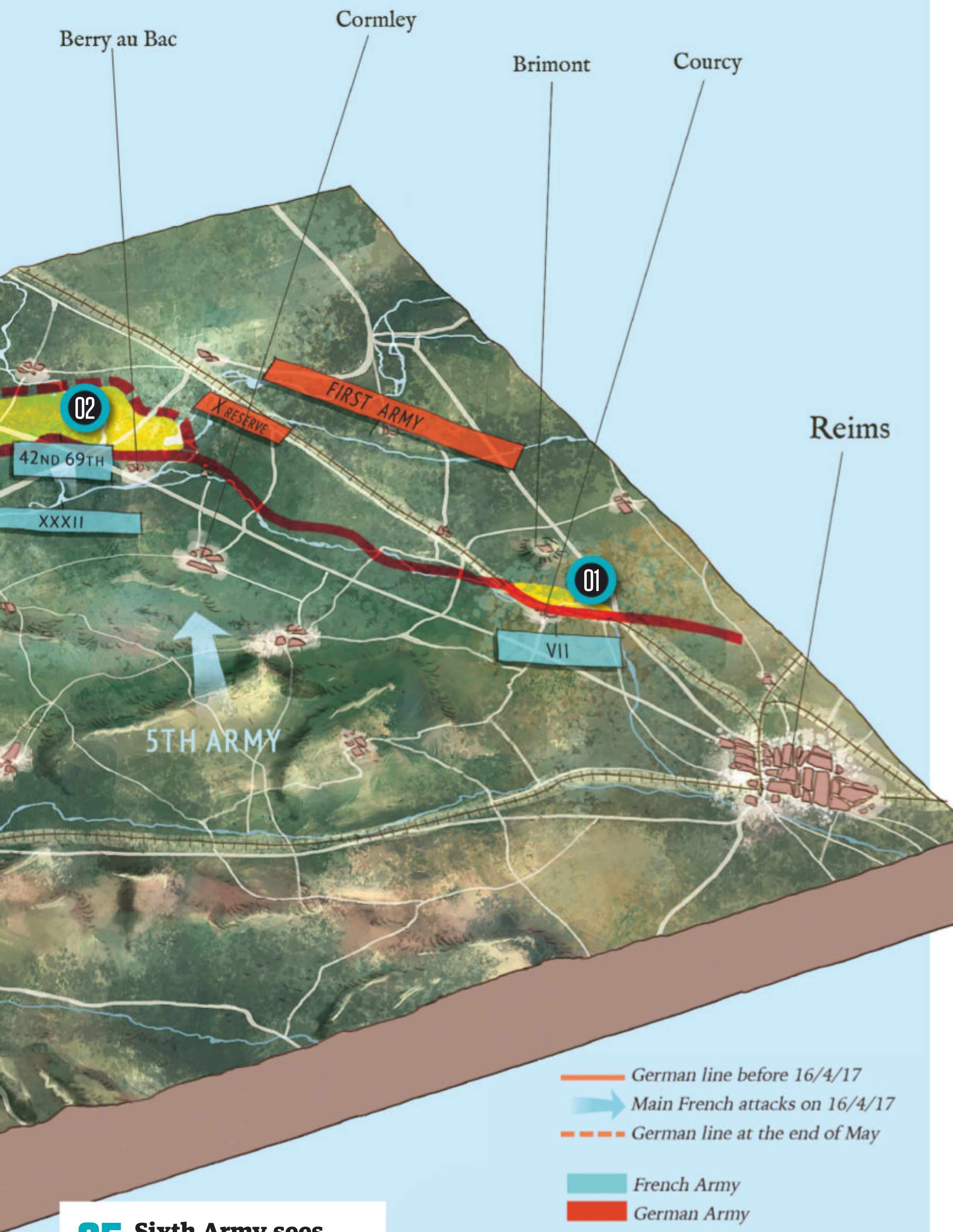
03 Sixth Army on the right flank

A key thrust for the Sixth Army is on the right flank, facing north, between Oulches and Missy. They advance rapidly for the first 30 minutes, but are stopped after gaining less than 1km.

04 153rd Divisions leads the Sixth Army

The 153rd Division sees the Sixth Army's greatest success. They reach Chemin des Dames south of Courtecon during two attacks, with a total advance of 2km.

Map illustration: Rocío Espín Piñar



to weaken the French charge before it reached the 'battle' sector – a far superior defensive area up to 2km deep and positioned on the reverse slope of hills to ensure surprise and protection from artillery.

Ludendorff filled the battle sector with machine gun posts and concrete pill boxes that could take a direct hit from an artillery shell. Communication trenches connected the positions to transfer the wounded and create bottlenecks in the enemy's advance. Men in defensive positions were drilled in the doctrine of elastic defence, falling back under attack before Eingreif-Divisionen (intervention divisions) would spring back in counterattack to reclaim the lost ground. Finally, the rearward sector stretched back as far as possible, holding support facilities and heavy artillery.

Defence in depth meant disaster for Nivelle's men, who were forced to attack up and over the Chemin des Dames ridgeline. They would have to cover up to 10km, climb 180 vertical metres of steep Aisne Valley hills and clear fortified positions before they reached the rearward sector.

A BRUTAL FIRST PHASE

Nivelle's plans were under strain even before a shot was fired. The diversionary attacks from France's allies were not on the scale he had envisaged because the Italians were too spent and the ongoing revolution to the east made Russia's support fragile. It was up to the British at the Battle of Arras and the Canadians at Vimy Ridge to pull the German defensive focus north from the Chemin des Dames. Starting on 9 April, the British and Canadians suffered huge casualties, including the loss of one-third of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), but Nivelle could not capitalise due to poor weather. Any further delays would leave the British and

▶

05 Sixth Army sees first major success

The Sixth Army continues to fight overnight 16/17 April and eventually forces the Germans to withdraw 6.4km from Braye–Condé–Laffaux. The German withdrawal is so rapid that they leave multiple guns and vast quantities of ammunition behind.

06 Tenth Army captures the Plateau de Californie

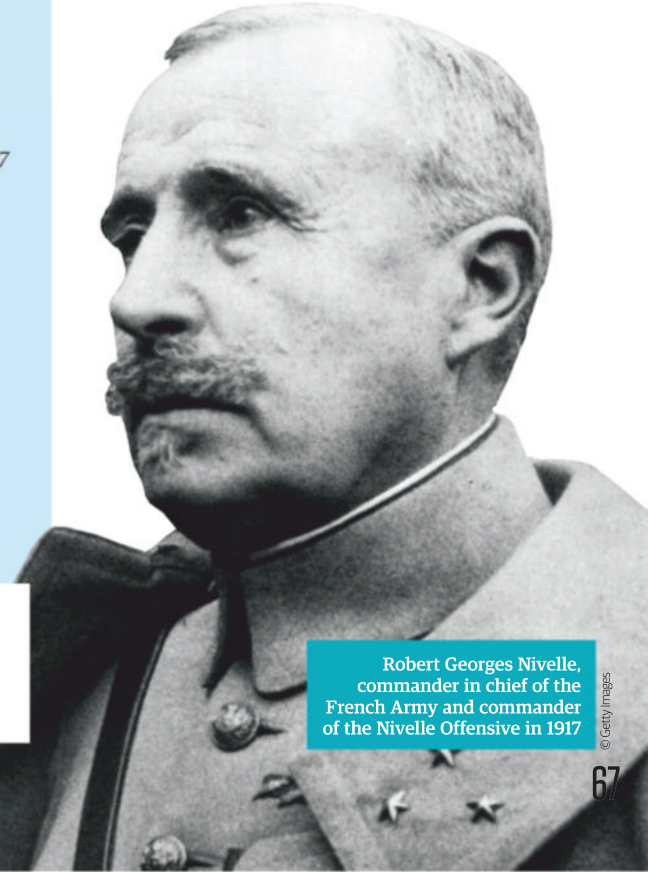
Nivelle orders his reserve, the Tenth Army, to advance between Fifth and Sixth Armies on 21 April. The IX and XVIII corps take over in the Craonne sector and advance onto the Plateau de Californie.

07 Sixth Army reaches Allemant

The 5 May begins with a Sixth Army advance from a salient opposite Laffaux. They face waves of German counterattacks while pushing north from Laffaux Mill. By the end of the day, they've reached the outskirts of Allemant and captured 4,000 prisoners.

08 Major counterattacks begin

For two nights between 6-8 May, German counterattacks begin across the front to recapture their lost defensive zone. The Plateau de Californie is a continued focal point of persistent German assaults, all of which are repelled.



Robert Georges Nivelle, commander in chief of the French Army and commander of the Nivelle Offensive in 1917

© Getty Images

Canadians out to dry, forcing Nivelle into action despite the continuing bad weather.

The first signs of the coming offensive came on the night of 15 April. Germans in the outpost sector donned their gas masks and hunkered down against the trommelfeuer (drumfire), the name they had given to the endless, rhythmic, ear-splitting bombardments that preceded major Allied attacks. By this time, the Germans had already observed the preparations for the offensive from their position at the top of the Aisne valley, but the artillery fire indicated the offensive was imminent.

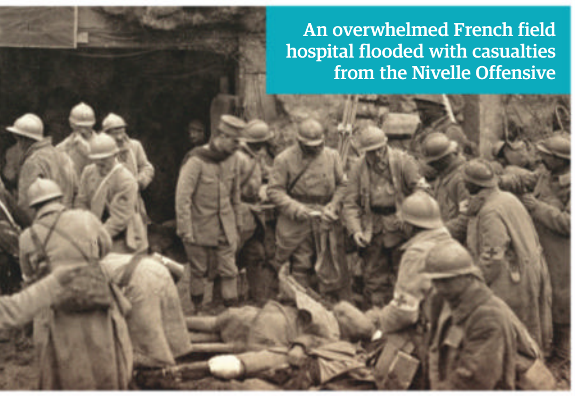
As the sun rose on 16 April, French soldiers charged across no man's land, advancing through artillery blasts and machine gun fire – falling in droves. Most of the initial wave did not reach the battle sector as they struggled up the steep banks of the Aisne River. The remaining French soldiers crashed headlong over the ridge and found themselves silhouetted against the morning sky, easy targets for the machine gunners on the reverse slope. Attacking in the eastern sector, the Fifth Army made minor advances into Bermericourt but fell in huge numbers against heavy shelling while trying to take the redoubt in Brimont. These efforts were futile as the Fifth Army survivors were turned around by midday when the Germans moved their reserves forward. The only French success was to the north, where the 42nd and 69th Divisions managed to advance 4km. Meanwhile, the Sixth Army attacks led to the capture of 3,500 POWs, but they only reached the battle sector once.

Meanwhile, the 1st and 2nd Divisions faced Craonne, a tiny French village. Napoleon had fended off Russian and Prussian forces from this exact plateau over 100 years previously at the Battle of Craonne (1814). A 1st Division report described the strategic significance of the village: "A village hanging on the bluff, below the almost vertical wall of the Plateau de Californie." The German positions in Craonne afforded them wide views of the French positions, making for an effective artillery observation post.

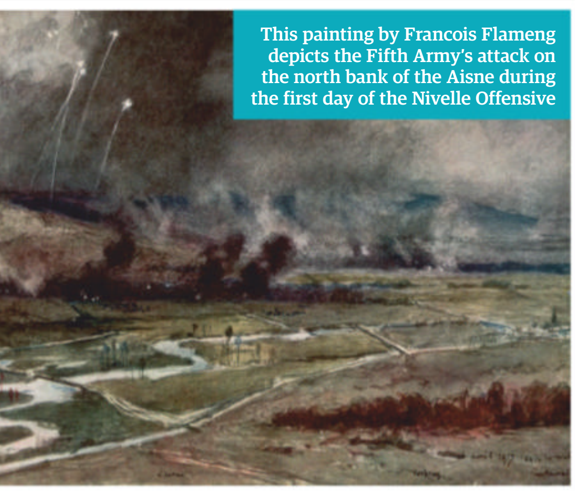
The assault on Craonne was disastrous as the grounded French Air Service could not conduct reconnaissance operations. Describing his surprise at the stiff defences, General Paul Jules Henri Muteau wrote: "In the fields east of Craonne, a large number of bunkers materialised." French infantrymen carried grenades and 37mm guns to take out the bunkers but were overwhelmed by their sheer number. At a high cost, the Germans were forced to withdraw before merciless artillery fire rained down on Craonne and pushed the French back from the village.

For wholesale advances of less than 500m in most sectors, the French suffered 40,000 casualties on the first day. "We have just taken part in one of the greatest crimes of the war," reflected one French infantryman. The suffering of those injured was unimaginable, made more horrific by the lack of medical facilities. Expecting low casualties after overwhelming the Germans, Nivelle had planned inadequate medical staff and field hospitals. The tide of wounded was overwhelming, and thousands had to wait outside overnight for treatment. Thousands more died in no man's land, in freezing rain, because of a shortage of stretcher parties.

General Philippe Pétain, appointed commander in chief of the French Army after Nivelle was fired



An overwhelmed French field hospital flooded with casualties from the Nivelle Offensive



This painting by Francois Flameng depicts the Fifth Army's attack on the north bank of the Aisne during the first day of the Nivelle Offensive

On 17 April, the focus shifted to the Fifth Army as Nivelle attempted to break through to the northeast, bypassing the Chemin des Dames. He believed the Germans would be preoccupied with holding ground against the Sixth Army and would be unable to deal with this new pressure. He could not have been more wrong, with the Fifth Army failing to make any ground. Meanwhile, the Sixth Army was less active, only manoeuvring to cover Fifth Army's left flank. Yet they saw tremendous success when the Germans abandoned the exposed salient at Vailly and pulled back to the Chemin des Dames. The Sixth Army had finally made it onto the plateau.

FIRST CHARGE OF THE FRENCH TANKS

Among the mud, blood and shell craters of the Nivelle Offensive's first day, the French Tank Corps rolled onto no man's land for the first time. Nivelle brought two formations of Schneider CA 1 tanks to the front at Berry-Au-Bac, chosen because its relatively flat ground offered maximum mobility. Each group was paired with infantry, with the tanks close behind as mobile artillery. On the right of the line, the formation led by Commandant Louis Bossut was making good progress, although they were starting to lose tanks, destroyed by artillery or rendered immobile by the mud. Bossut was among the early casualties, and the tanks entered the German battle zone without their commander. This was where their progress stopped as German artillery observers on the Plateau de Californie quickly called in strikes against them. The latest in mechanised warfare soon became crumpled, smoking metal hulks, and the crewmen who could escape from the wrecks fled back to French lines.

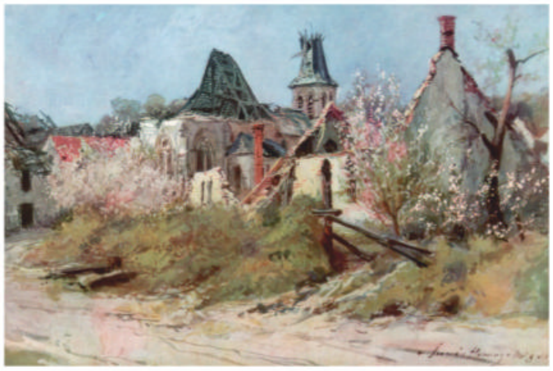
The formation pushing on towards Berry-au-Bac from the left faced even bigger problems. Anticipating a mechanised attack, the Germans had widened their trenches so the tanks couldn't get across them. Unable to advance and stuck in a column, they were sitting ducks, and the French infantry had to assault German positions without the planned tank support.

The first French tank assault had been an unmitigated disaster: the French Tank Corps lost three-quarters of its vehicles, either broken down or destroyed by relentless artillery bombardments, while 143 of the 720 crewmen became casualties. The tank assault was so calamitous that the French Tank Corps was almost abolished, only saved by the appointment of Philippe Pétain as commander in chief after the Nivelle Offensive and his friendship with French tank pioneer Jean Baptiste Eugène Estienne.

A DECEPTIVE CALM

After the initial chaos of the battle, a lull set in on the 19th while troops from both sides recovered from their efforts. News of the disaster and the 96,000 French casualties was spreading and Nivelle

Louis de Cazenave, a French veteran who was 20 years old during the Nivelle Offensive: "I left with a gun, I came back as a pacifist."



The ruins of Craonne, a village completely destroyed by heavy artillery bombardments during the attack

returned to Paris to meet Prime Minister Alexandre Ribot and President Raymond Poincaré. They were horrified to learn that the Chemin des Dames was now drenched in French blood and pleaded with Nivelle to avoid more losses. He agreed to their demands, having been considering a tactical shift regardless, as any further Sixth Army progress northeast would only create an exposed salient until the Fifth Army could advance. Instead, the Sixth Army operations would be limited, aiming to consolidate control of the Chemin des Dames ridgeline. At the same time, the Tenth Army pushed through the centre to protect the right flank and finally gain control of Craonne.

Operations by the Fifth, Sixth and Tenth Armies continued with a limited scope, although the work was still grinding and costly for the thousands of men involved. Machine gun fire and continuing poor weather halted these efforts before the French could secure a foothold. The only significant gain of territory came on 5 May during a Sixth and Tenth Army offensive pushing eastwards from Laffaux at the western edge of the operation.

Nivelle was already thinking about how he could be absolved of blame for the failure, immediately passing the buck onto General Charles Mangin, commander of the Sixth Army. He transferred Mangin to the inactive list, telling him: "You no longer have your subordinates' trust." All the while, French leadership lacked the political wherewithal to take action against Nivelle himself.

GERMAN FORCES FIGHT BACK

The French efforts hadn't yielded a breakthrough, but they had successfully advanced well into the German defences. Ludendorff and Crown Prince Wilhelm were anxious to push the French back before they could consolidate their gains and fortify their positions. German troops, exhausted by over a fortnight of gritty defence, counterattacked resolutely under cover of darkness. They twice tried to retake territory between Vauxaillon in the west and Craonne in the centre over two nights between 6-8 May. Further efforts were made near Craonne and the Plateau de Californie on 8/9 May. These counteroffensives continued until 11 May, but were all repulsed, with small French gains in some sectors. As the weather improved, the French Air Service was finally able to resume operations and a deluge of bombs replaced the rain that had been falling on the attacking German infantry. After a week's break, the German counteroffensive sparked back into life on 16 May, beginning in the west near Laffaux before shifting back to Craonne and the Plateau de Californie until 21 May. Once more, these attacks were smashed by artillery and machine gun fire, with a further 1,350 German prisoners captured.

The German forces regrouped to reconsider their plan of attack, eventually beginning the Battle of the Observatories as darkness fell on 23 May. Lasting until 3 June, the German troops made it into their former defences multiple times, including at salients on both sides of Cerny and Laffaux to the west. But ironically, defence in depth began to work against them – they couldn't root out the French from the German-built network of communications trenches and were repeatedly pushed back. While the French defenders were now in range of German artillery, they were safely nestled among well-built German defences. The Battle of the Observatories reached its climactic end with a last assault on the Plateau de Californie and at the Western Vauclerc Plateau on 2/3 June. Wave upon wave of German troops, armed with flamethrowers, advanced shoulder to shoulder. But even this unprecedented and horrific show of force wasn't enough to dislodge the French and Ludendorff called off the counteroffensive. ○

Men of the 370th French Infantry Regiment eat soup in a moment of downtime during the Nivelle Offensive

All images: © Getty Images

What If...

NATO HAD NOT BEEN FORMED?

America withdraws its troops, missiles and money, and leaves Europe to fend for itself against the USSR

Interview by David J Williamson

INTERVIEW WITH

© J Sadler

JOHN SADLER

Sadler has published numerous books on WWII, including his recent *The Heavy Water War*. He has taught at Newcastle University's Department of Lifelong Learning and takes tour groups around battlefields. Together with Bev Palin, he runs Time Bandits, a living history and reenactment group often to be seen in WWII guise.

THE
HEAVY
WATER
WAR
BEATING HITLER
TO THE BOMB
JOHN SADLER
© Amberley

Was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) a done deal from the start, or were there voices of domestic political opposition from the United States and Europe?

In March 1946, at Westminster College, Winston Churchill delivered his famous 'Iron Curtain' speech: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an Iron Curtain has descended across the continent." He wasn't wrong.

Following victory over Nazi Germany and the partitioning of the defeated lands by the Allies, it's fair to say that most in the US and the UK were content, indeed relieved, to see the formation of NATO. But many protest groups were not convinced. Although not formed until the latter years of the 1950s, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament reflected ordinary citizens' fear of nuclear destruction and their mistrust of politicians to keep them safe.

A strong faction within Europe and Britain failed to recognise the USSR as an active threat, preferring appeasement, even rapprochement – even after the merciless crushing of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution against Soviet rule.

With no NATO in place, how might American and European policies have shifted?

The risk, clearly from a purely US standpoint, might have been a return to prewar isolationism, a trend that President Donald Trump might lean towards [in his second term as US president]. The former occupant of the White House, Joe Biden, expressed a more pithily committed view: "America's commitment to collective defence under Article 5 of NATO is a sacred obligation, not just for now but for all time." Nonetheless, had it been the case that European partners after 1945 had no appetite for a collective stand against the USSR's aggression, there is no saying that the US might have taken a wider worldview and relegated the defence of Europe to a secondary position, preferring to look, say, at the Pacific Rim, Middle East or Africa.

The Cold War is a battle that never was, yet it could so easily have flared up during a variety of collateral conflicts. Not least of these was, and indeed is, the Arab/Israeli situation. From 1948 onwards, US and Israeli interests coincided, while the USSR embraced [Gamal Abdel] Nasser in Egypt. 'Substitute' conflicts by the superpowers of the then-Soviet Union and the US are nothing new and even continue today in various parts of the world. They are that time-worn mix of ideology, ambition and influence that both sides play to suit their own ends and further their own agendas. Sometimes the distance between the two big hitters comes perilously close, as in the potential involvement of NATO forces in the current conflict in Ukraine. All it takes is for one NATO member to be attacked and the mechanisms of the whole alliance come into play.

СОЮЗ МИРА И СОЦИАЛИЗМА
ВАРШАВСКИЙ ДОГОВОР

RIGHT The USSR's Warsaw Pact cemented Soviet ideology in Eastern Europe

What action could the Soviet Union have been tempted to carry out?

Between 1948 and 1949, Joseph Stalin attempted to eliminate the Free World enclave of West Berlin, buried inside Soviet-controlled East Germany, linked only by a narrow land umbilical that Russia could and did sever, leaving the city's inhabitants at the risk of mass starvation. Stalin had form here – ask any Ukrainian today. Nonetheless, NATO responded with the famed Berlin Airlift, a Sisyphean task whereby Western planes kept the city supplied and defied the Soviet blockade. Such an effort stunned even Stalin, and eventually [he] was forced to admit defeat. This was a battle, not a shooting match, but a conflict of ideologies and logistics that could easily have escalated. It was a clear victory and thorough vindication for NATO.

This reverse taught the USSR that, firstly, NATO was serious, and secondly, that the organisation was in it for the long term. Stalin had initially thought otherwise and that much of the rump of

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THE PAST

1948-49

AIRBORNE AID

Following the success of the communist party in Czechoslovakia, Joseph Stalin tested the resolve of the Western powers. Berlin had been carved in two as part of the post-war agreement; although sitting in Soviet-controlled East Germany, West Berlin was controlled by the US, UK and France. Stalin blockaded West Berlin to prevent supplies reaching the city by land. Such a face-off between the US and USSR could've had dire consequences, but the solution lay in a massive airlift in and out of West Berlin. It was a huge effort that lasted almost a year. Stalin had made his point, and Western Europe knew a military alliance with the USA was essential.

1949

HANDS ACROSS THE OCEAN

NORTH ATLANTIC
PACT

In 1948, several European countries signed the Brussels Treaty as a military alliance and collective response to growing tensions and fears of potential security issues in post-war Europe. In the US, the Vandenburg Resolution triggered negotiations with European countries that had a North Atlantic coastline to create the North Atlantic Treaty. The treaty was signed in 1949 and it committed its signatories to a mutual defence of their nations: should any one of them be attacked then all would respond. The complexity and sheer enormity of this cooperation would soon be put to the test.

1950s

TIT FOR TAT

Soon after the creation of NATO came the Korean War, and all the organisational skills and military resources of the United Nations Command, led by the USA, were needed to support the South Koreans. It was almost a dry run for NATO members to practise their collaboration. By 1952, Greece and Turkey had joined NATO, and in 1955, West Germany. This triggered a response from Moscow, creating the Warsaw Treaty Organisation among its satellite states. This was essentially a mirror image of NATO, with Moscow pulling the strings. Amid rising tensions, the United States created the doctrine of 'massive retaliation' – the use of nuclear weapons against the USSR or China in response to any conventional aggression anywhere in the world.

> "There would undoubtedly still have been significant cooperation with the US"

a free Europe could be subsumed beneath the red banner. Not only did NATO show steely resolve but it also demonstrated, in the most vivid manner, its power, superb logistics and US commitment to its allies. Berlin was indeed a battle, one which Stalin lost. He could not afford another such defeat, though NATO was not able to prevent Russia's savage ripostes against nations enmeshed within the Iron Curtain from breaking free, as the Hungarians discovered in 1956, followed by Czechs in 1968.

With no United States on board, could another, different kind of European alliance have emerged, and what would it have looked like?

At that time, many of the now-member states were forcibly marooned behind the Iron Curtain and coerced into membership of the Warsaw Pact. This came into being in May 1955 as a military alliance between the USSR and seven vassal states – originally the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (TFCMA). The military aspect, Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO), balanced the purely economic facet – the Council for Mutual Economic

NATO Had Not Been Formed?

Assistance (COMECON). This was a direct reaction to the formation of NATO, perceived by the communists as primarily defensive.

Without the United States, it would be difficult to see how the Berlin Airlift confrontation could have been won, and it is hard to say what motivation the European states might have had to join together in a military alliance. The Common Market, now the European Union, was, in part, a reaction to the growing rift with the Soviet Union after 1947, and Winston Churchill was an enthusiastic proponent. From 1948 we saw the beginnings of an institutionalised, modern European integration.

If the United States had preferred an isolationist stance, then it is unlikely NATO would have existed in its original or current form. What we would probably have seen would be a European Union Army made up of detachments from the member states and the United Kingdom (not at that point a member). In some ways, it was almost a mirror of the Warsaw Pact but organised along democratic rather than totalitarian lines.

ABOVE-LEFT
Europe could not substitute the military might of the USA

ABOVE
Without the United States, Europe would have faced Stalin's USSR alone

BOTTOM-LEFT
The Berlin Wall may never have come down

What would've been the financial consequences for Europe with no US involvement in its defence?

European states, if they had been obliged to shoulder the full fiscal burden of an EU Army, would have felt the impact on their respective economies and likely necessitated a much higher contribution from GDP in percentage terms. There would undoubtedly still have been significant cooperation with the US, whose massive resources were always a primary deterrent against Soviet aggression. It might have, indeed must have, led to a wholly different perspective from European states, each of whom, within NATO, felt dwarfed by the American juggernaut.

What would've been the far-reaching consequences without NATO?

Without the United States, Europe would have been confronting the Warsaw Pact states without the shield of America as an inherent, indeed dominant, element. What a military alliance between European states and the UK without direct US involvement might have looked like, we can't say. Its nuclear arsenal would have been much reduced, and member states, as Britain did with the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR), would have needed to keep their own armed forces permanently up to wartime levels. Whether such an accord, post-fall of the Berlin Wall, would have continued is impossible to judge.

THE POSSIBILITY

1940s-50s

STANDING ALONE

With the Brussels Treaty of 1948, there was an indication among European nations that they had to do something to stick together and not blindly rely on the US to come to their aid. But putting that into practice was a different matter. The spoils of war for many Western allies were not sufficient to rebuild their nations. Without the US, the cost of a standing army in constant readiness would be crippling. Facing a new 'enemy' in the Soviet Union, with its people driven by a single ideology and a regime determined to rebuild and even expand its nation, the threat of further conflict in Europe would have been very real.

1960s

EMPTY POCKETS

Wars are often fought to defend a way of life, a belief or the rights of individuals. But the aftermath is almost always about money. In post-war Europe, money to rebuild nations and lives was thin on the ground. The huge US economy had more than played its part during and after the war. But without that, most European nations would struggle. Borrowing enough to make ends meet would have a colossal effect on both domestic and global markets. Hard decisions would need to be made, and the rationing of food and other items may have continued well into the 1960s, greatly increasing the potential for domestic unrest.

1960 – PRESENT

NO THAW IN THE COLD WAR

Even if the USA had not become part of NATO, its relationship with the Soviet Union would probably have been just as competitive and just as frosty. Even with no official alliance with Europe, the US would still have needed the support of many Western countries to conduct its espionage and covert intelligence operations. In return, Europe may well have expected, or even demanded, 'unofficial' support in their own relationships with Moscow. Nevertheless, with the heat of the nuclear arms race, the chill of the Cold War, and no structure in place for the US to defend Europe, perestroika and the eventual collapse of the Berlin Wall may have taken much longer, if at all.

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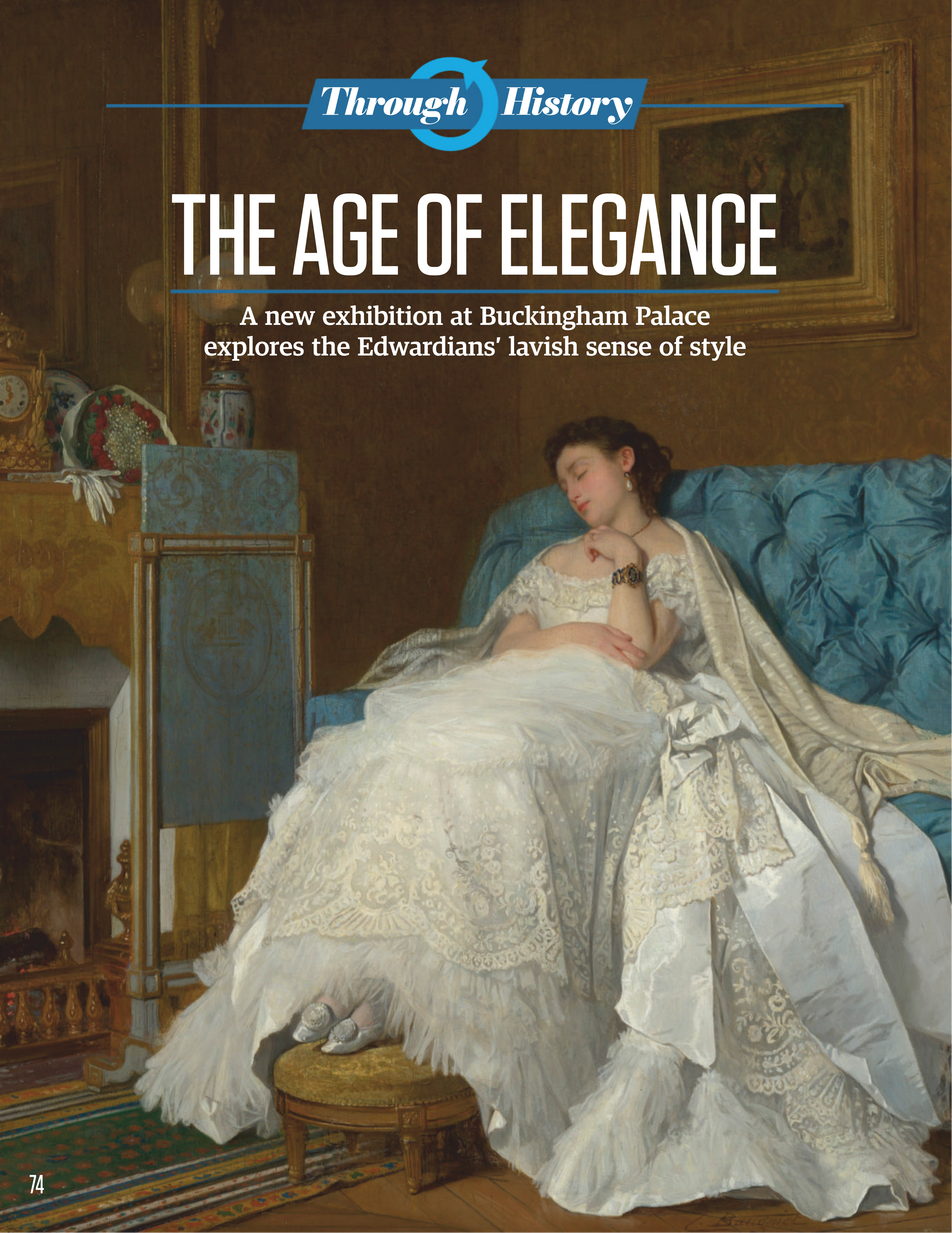
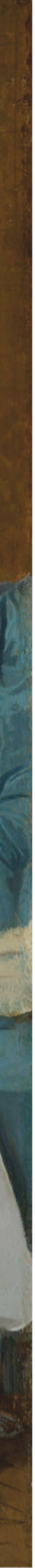
THE AGE OF ELEGANCE

A new exhibition at Buckingham Palace explores the Edwardians' lavish sense of style

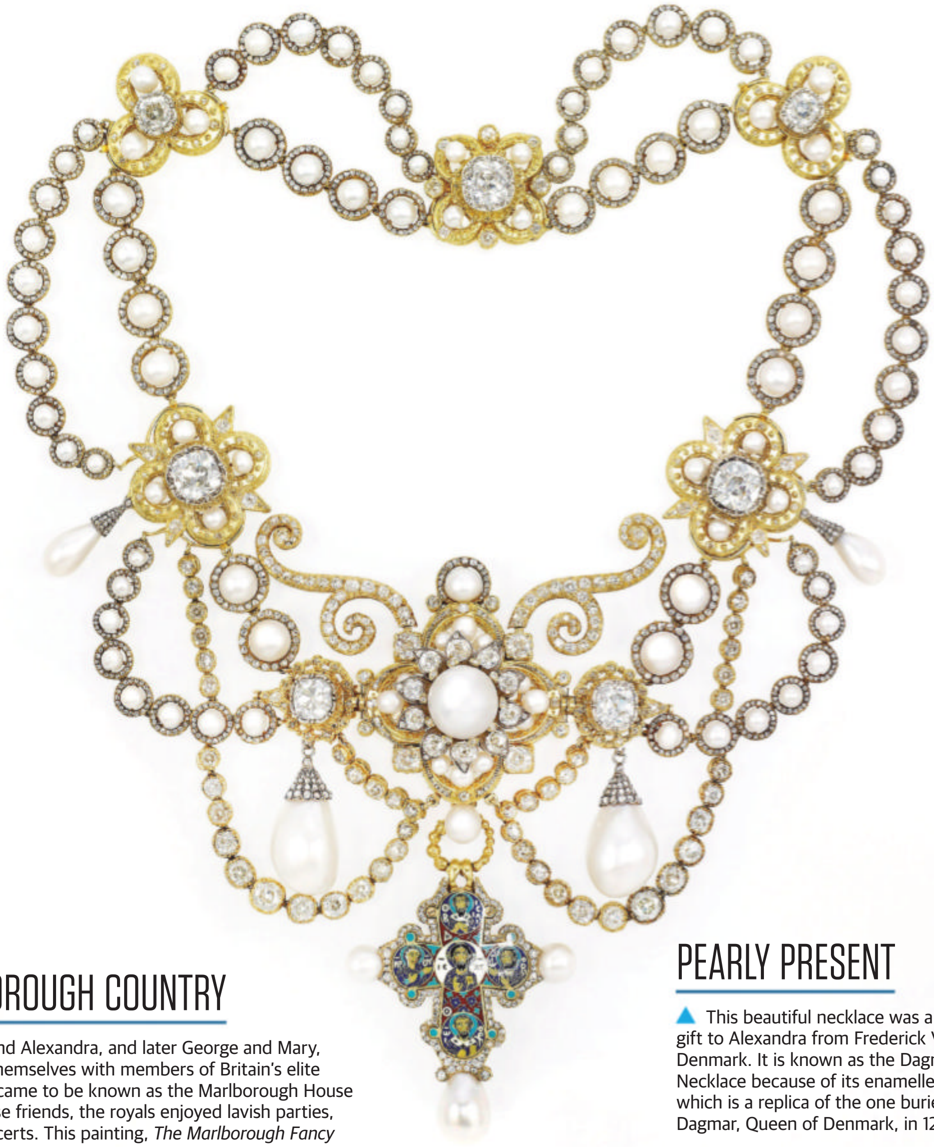




Following the marriage of Queen Victoria's eldest son Albert Edward to Princess Alexandra of Denmark in 1863, the British monarchy underwent a transition from the sombre court of the mournful Victoria to a modern, opulent centre of glamour and elegance. Albert inherited the crown after Victoria's death in 1901, becoming King Edward VII, and with Queen Alexandra at his side the fashionable Edwardian court thrived.

The couple were renowned for their style and the royal residences were adorned with their collections of stunning objects and artwork. Their penchant for all things fashionable was continued by their son King George V, who came to the throne in 1910, and his wife Queen Mary. The prized possessions of these elegant royal couples, today held by the Royal Collection Trust, are now on display in a new exhibition at The King's Gallery at Buckingham Palace.

The Edwardians: Age of Elegance brings together 300 items, half of which are on display for the first time, to "explore the lives and tastes of two of Britain's most fashionable royal couples… from their family lives and personal collecting to their glittering social circles, global travels and spectacular royal events."



A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

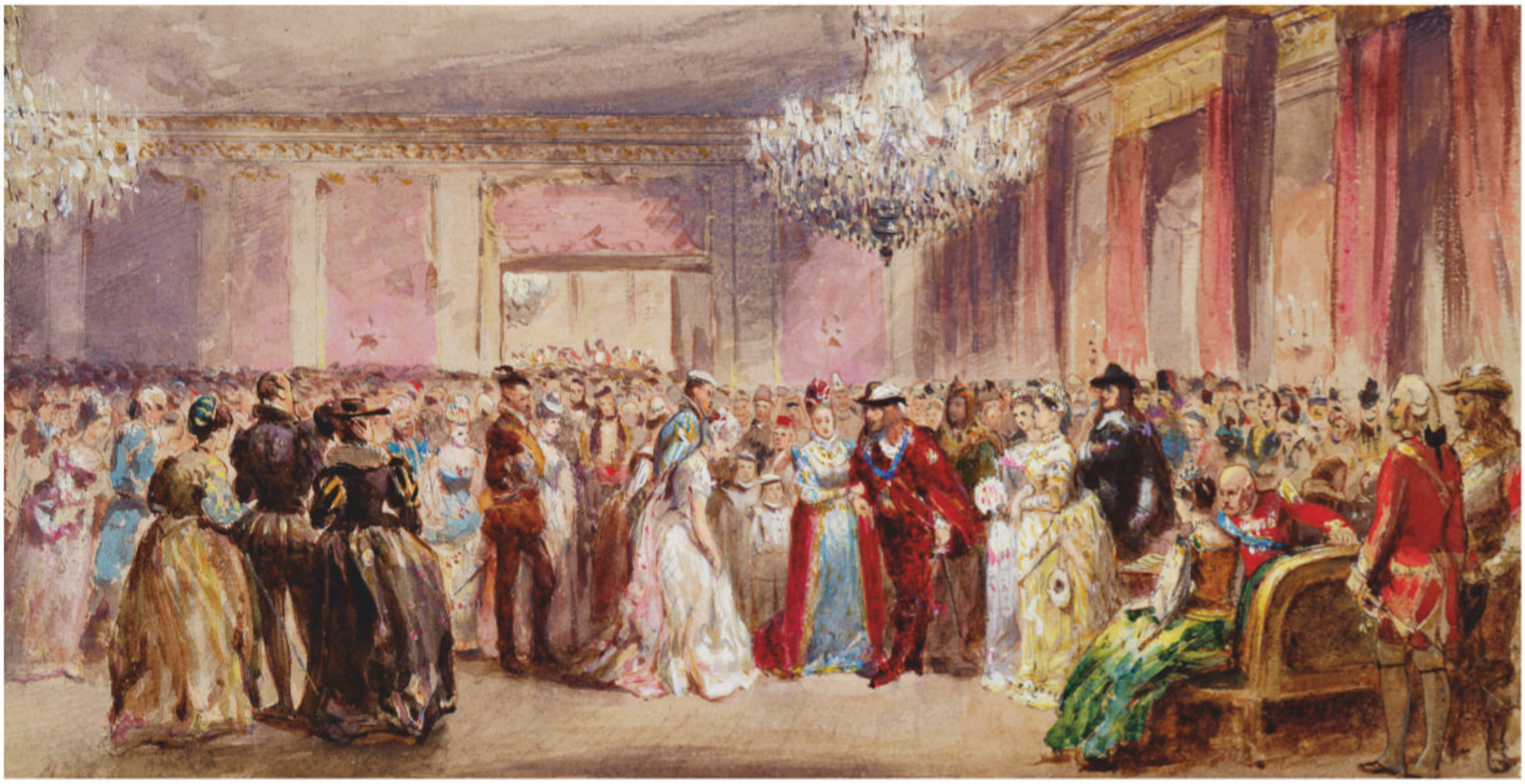
◀ On public display at the exhibition for the first time in over a century, Charles Baugniet's *After the Ball* evokes the glamorous spirit of the Edwardian age with its depiction of a society beauty asleep on a sofa, still wearing her ball gown.

MARLBOROUGH COUNTRY

▼ Edward and Alexandra, and later George and Mary, surrounded themselves with members of Britain's elite society, who came to be known as the Marlborough House set. With these friends, the royals enjoyed lavish parties, balls and concerts. This painting, *The Marlborough Fancy Ball*, is attributed to artist Godefroy Durand.

PEARLY PRESENT

▲ This beautiful necklace was a wedding gift to Alexandra from Frederick VII of Denmark. It is known as the Dagmar Necklace because of its enamelled cross, which is a replica of the one buried with Dagmar, Queen of Denmark, in 1212.



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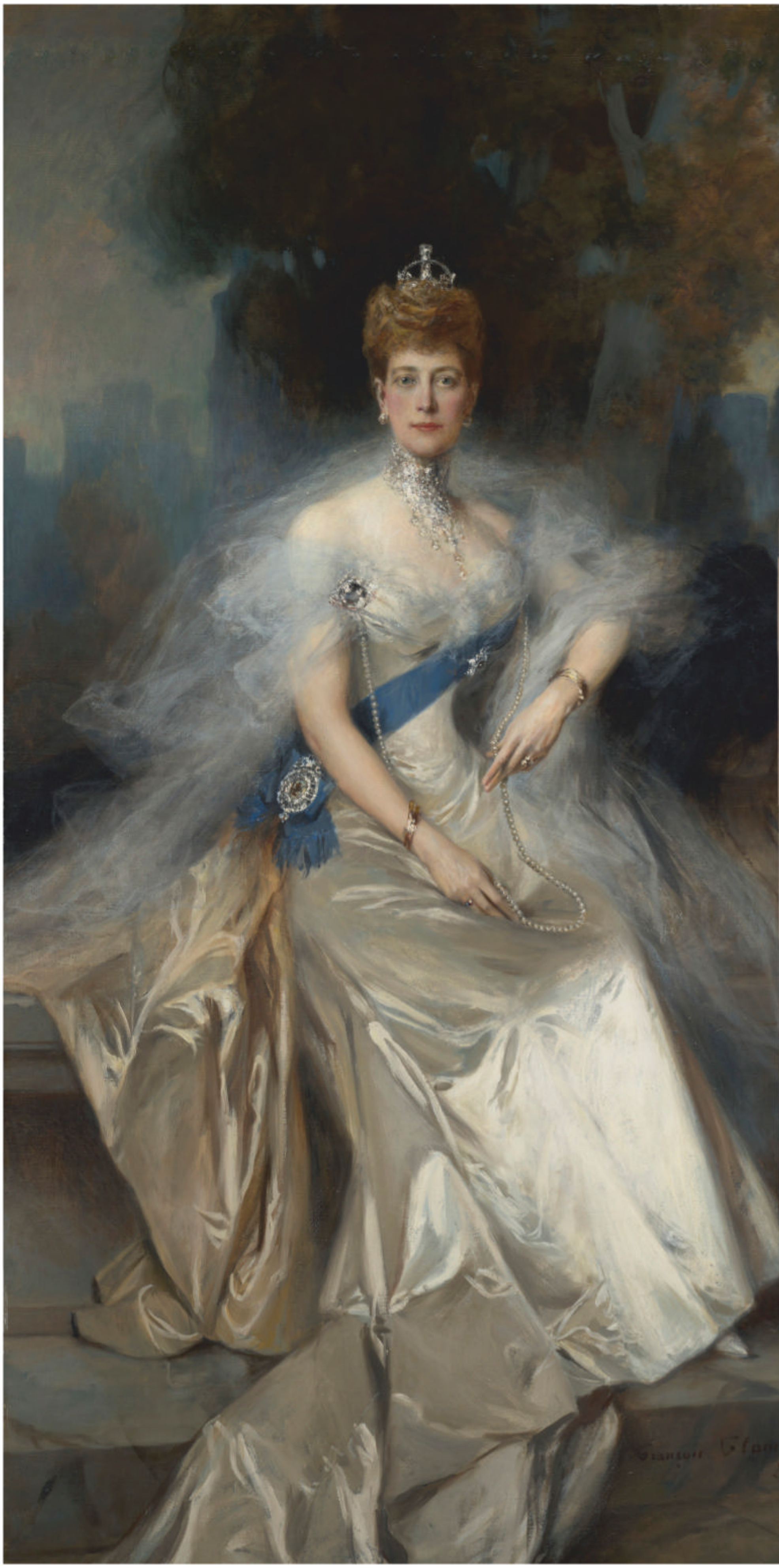
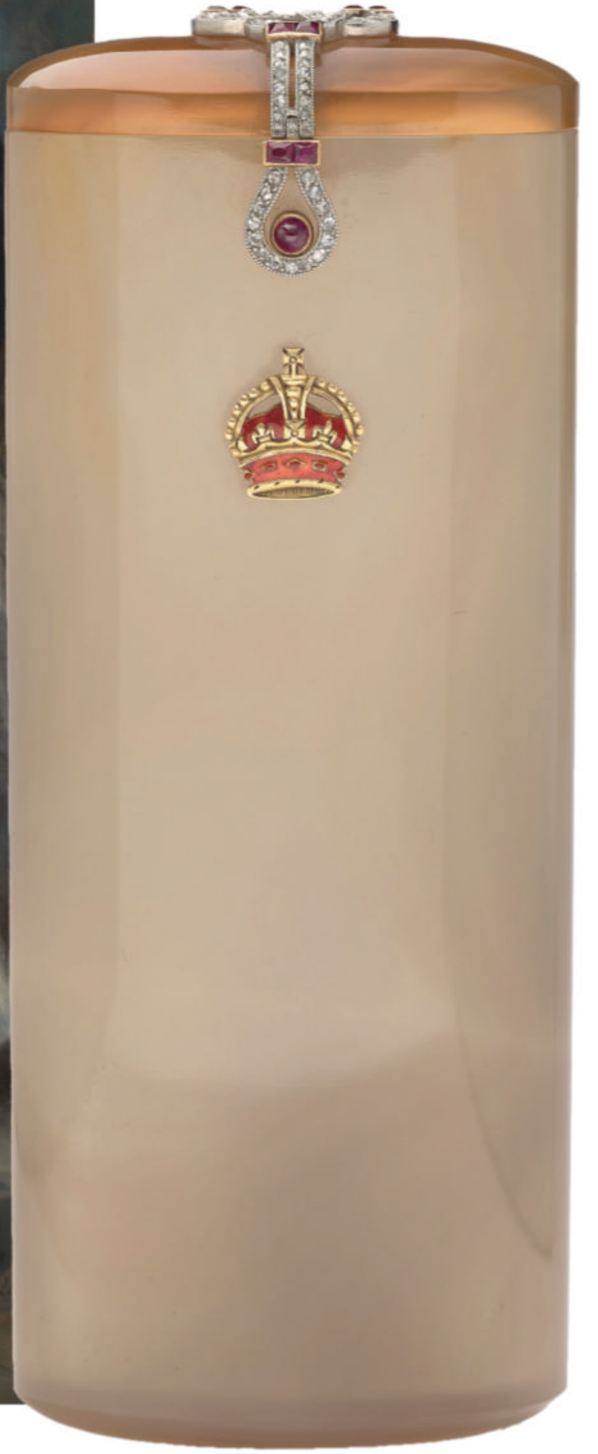


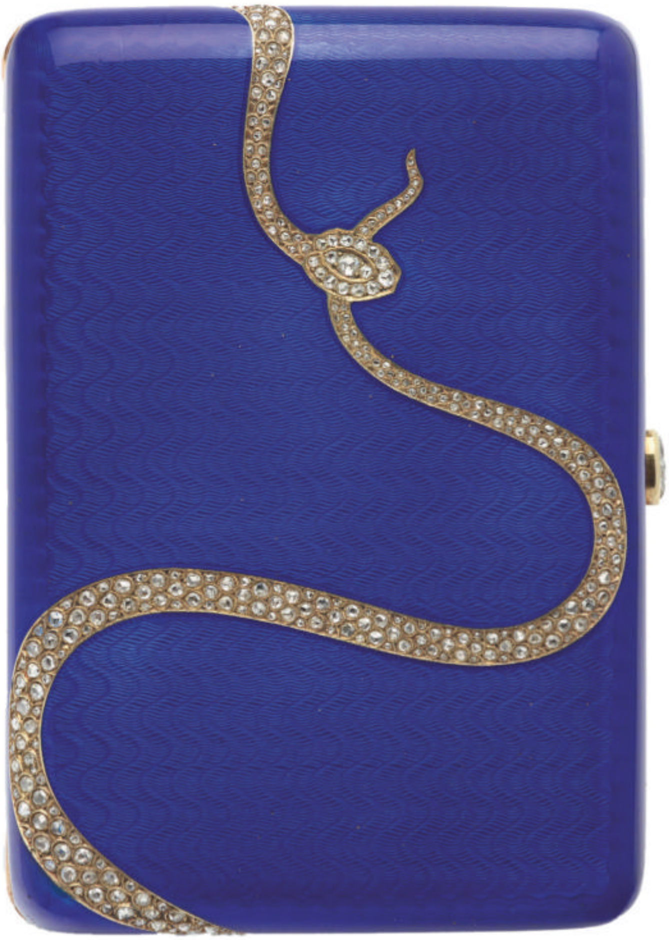
QUEEN OF DIAMONDS

Queen Alexandra was described by *Vogue* as "the legitimate head of fashion throughout the British dominions". Painted here in her 60s by French artist François Flameng, she exudes style and elegance, wearing diamonds including the Koh-i-Noor.

THE WRITE STUFF

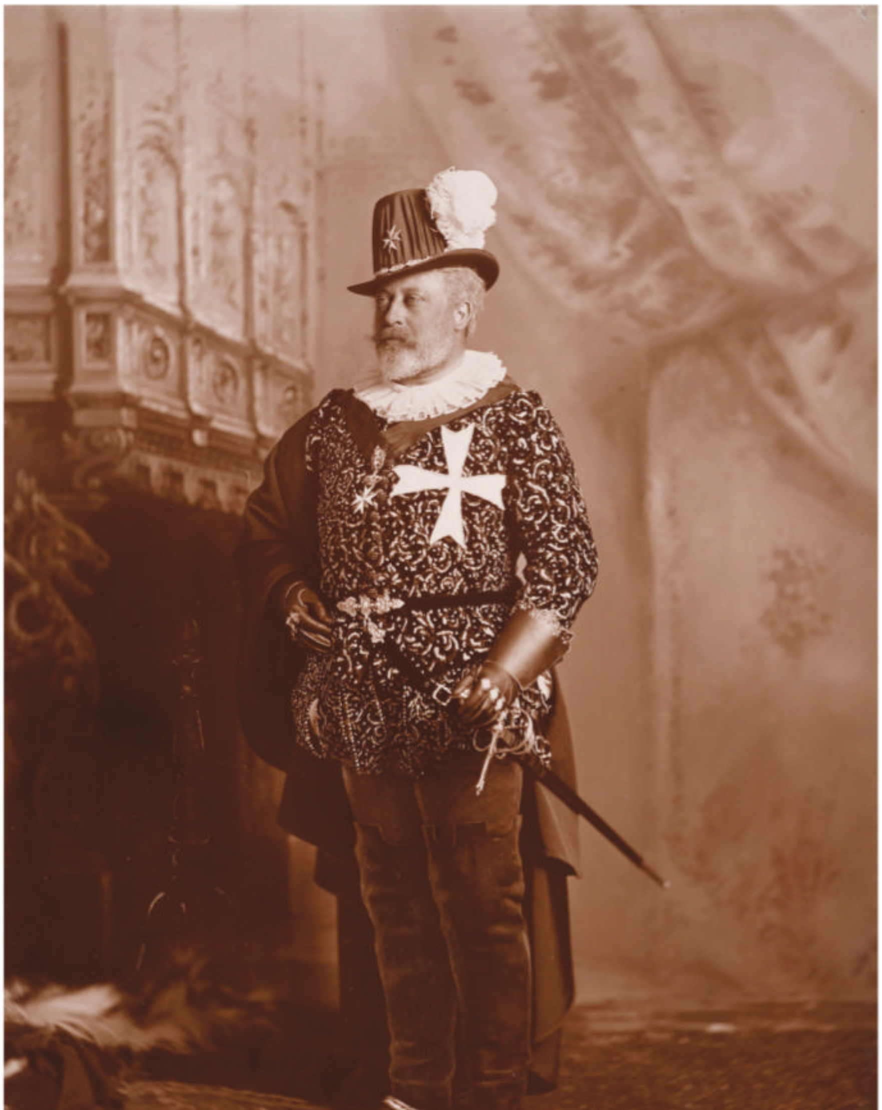
This crystal pencil case made by Cartier is an example of some of the glamorous and extravagant items on display. It's set with rubies and diamonds, and is being exhibited to the public for the very first time.





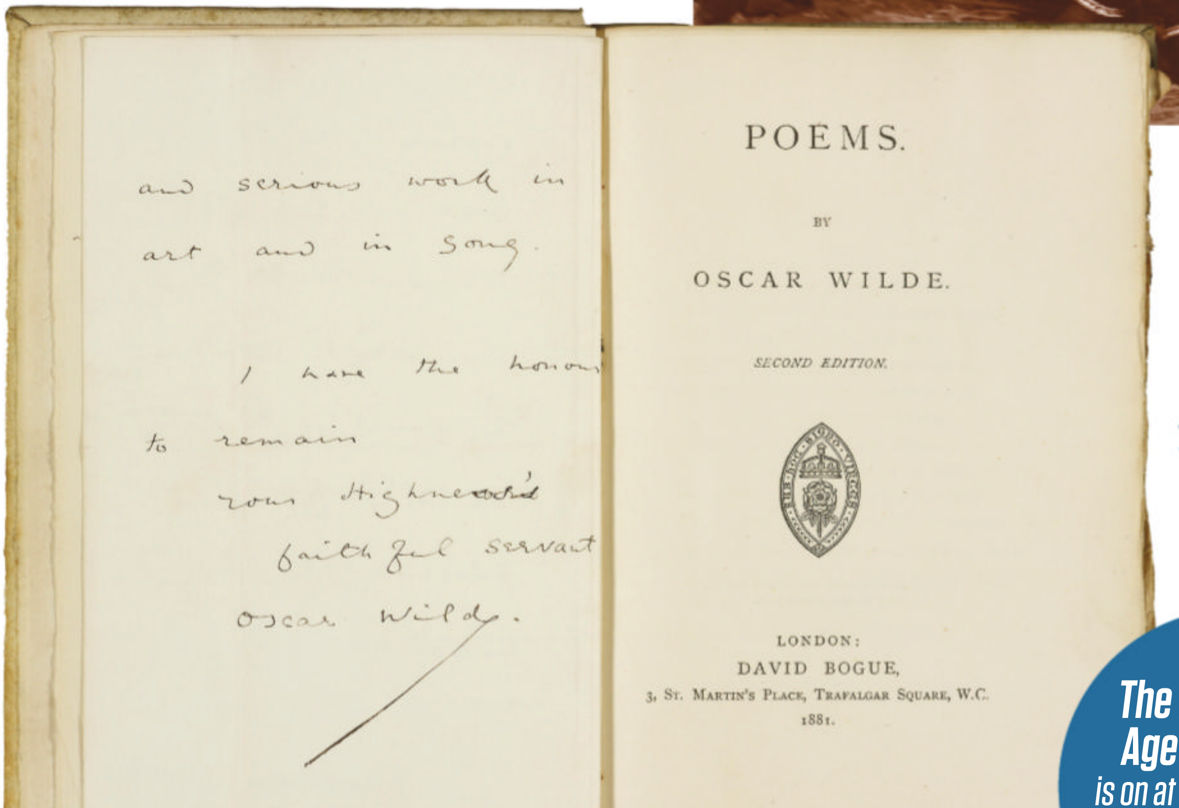
SNAKE CHARM

▲ Created by the celebrated Russian jeweller Fabergé, this blue enamel cigarette case was given to Edward VII by his favourite mistress Mrs George Keppel. The design of a diamond snake biting its tale is a symbol of eternal love.



FANCY THAT

▲ This photograph shows Edward, Prince of Wales (the future Edward VII) at a ball celebrating Queen Victoria's 1897 Diamond Jubilee. He is in fancy dress as a knight of the Order of Malta.



and serious work in
art and in song.

I have the honour
to remain
your Highness's
faithful servant
Oscar Wilde.

POEMS.

BY

OSCAR WILDE.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
DAVID BOGUE,
3, St. Martin's Place, Trafalgar Square, W.C.
1881.

WILDE ABOUT THE ARTS

◀ Among the items on display in the exhibition are objects collected by the royals as eager patrons of the arts. This copy of Oscar Wilde's poems belonged to Edward VII and was gifted to him by Wilde, with a personal inscription, when Edward was the Prince of Wales.

The Edwardians: Age of Elegance is on at The King's Gallery, Buckingham Palace until 23 November 2025

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REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month

sky original
SCIENCE FICTION
IN THE ATOMIC AGE

Main: © Bettmann Inset: ©Sky UK

WONDERLAND: SCIENCE FICTION IN THE ATOMIC AGE

A weaving of the evolution of sci-fi and the history that helped to shape it

Director: Adrian Munsey **Length:** Four episodes **Streaming:** Sky **Released:** Out now

Have you ever noticed how sometimes two movies can land with very similar ideas behind them? *Dante's Peak* and *Volcano*. *Deep Impact* and *Armageddon*. *The Truman Show* and *EDtv*. They're apparently called 'twin films' and it happens quite a lot. The underlying theory of why tends to look at social circumstances; that events in the world have inspired creative minds to think along similar lines. Adrian Munsey's four-part documentary looking at the history of science fiction spends much of its time connecting those threads.

From the first written science fiction to multi-million dollar film franchises, this documentary series connects the dots between events in the world and the stories they inspired. The first episode looks at the first sci-fi, like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and the later influence of the First World War and then atomic weapons in visions of apocalyptic futures. Episode two delves into the space race and the emergence of dystopian fiction through writers like Arthur C Clarke and Ray Bradbury. The third episode brings us into more multicultural science fiction and themes of feminism and race in storytelling, such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. It concludes in the fourth episode with a deeper examination of the role of film and television in science fiction, up to the Marvel Cinematic Universe and Christopher Nolan.

As you can tell from that breakdown, it's a documentary that spans over 200 years of history, although it spends most of its time, as the show's title suggests, focused on the mid-20th century and the 'golden age' of sci-fi that emerged in novels and on screen. The panel of experts, ranging from established science fiction writers to historians, and quotes and excerpts from some of the genre's greatest minds, give the whole piece tremendous weight and expertise. While it bounces around a lot, perhaps getting a little unfocused in the third episode, it weaves together a compelling story through these disparate books and TV shows.

It's certainly at its best in those first two episodes, where written works of science fiction and the tremendous events of the first half of the 20th century are so clearly connected. These were times where new levels of destruction in the real world inspired dark tales of unknown horrors and paranoia for the end of civilisation. However, it was also a time of great leaps in technology that could open up authors to visions of new frontiers in space or beyond.

You may hit a few plot spoilers along the way, but since most of the titles discussed are several years old at this point, this hopefully won't be too much of a concern. As the series progressed, we noted down a few authors' names for future reference and enjoyment. If your interests sit at the crossroads of history and sci-fi then this has to be a must-watch. If you just happen to like *2001: A Space Odyssey* or *Doctor Who*, you'll likely get a lot from this documentary too. ***JG***

★★★★☆

Reviews by
Catherine Curzon, Jonathan Gordon, Jackson van Uden

WHEN WE RULED: THE RISE AND FALL OF TWELVE AFRICAN QUEENS AND WARRIORS

Exploring the real history of Africa

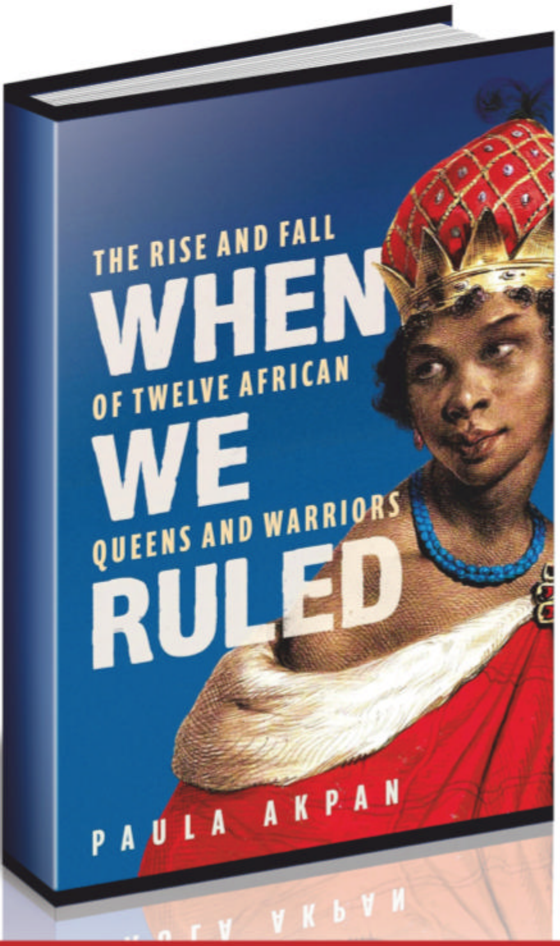
Author: Paula Akpan **Publisher:** Hachette **Price:** £22 **Released:** Out now

The story of the nations and people of the African continent is often told from a colonial, imperial point of view, with many histories focusing on colonial atrocities, the 'Scramble for Africa' in the 1800s or the fights for independence during the 1900s. But in *When We Ruled* Paula Akpan gives us an Afro-centric non-colonial telling of a history that needs to be told. By recounting the stories of 12 inspiring queens and warriors, Akpan is correcting a world historical view of Africa, African women and African power that has been entrenched for centuries by colonial powers like Britain and France.

Our favourite part of this book is the story of Abla Pokou, which not only details her sacrifice to secure a future for her people but also explores the Asante people's ideas about divinity and their ways of explaining the world around them. Akpan travelled through the continent when writing and researching this book, and as a result has been able to collect and weave in the stories that people tell about these women today, stories that are steeped in oral history and local traditions.

In *When We Ruled* Akpan has crafted vivid and engaging narratives that expertly shed light on the different histories found within the continent. She teaches us Togolese, Beninese and Madagascan histories, among others, which show the rich and diverse nature of the continent. ***JvU***

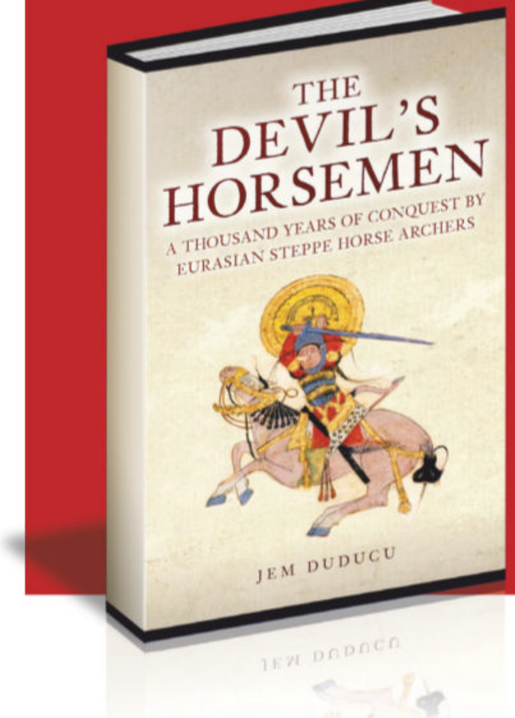
★★★★☆



THE DEVIL'S HORSEMEN: A THOUSAND YEARS OF CONQUEST BY EURASIAN STEPPE HORSE ARCHERS

Learn how these legendary warriors helped shape history

Author: Jem Duducu **Publisher:** Amberley **Price:** £22.99 **Released:** Out now



In *The Devil's Horsemen,* Jem Duducu has brought to us a refreshing story of the Eurasian horse archers. This area of history is criminally understudied and Duducu helps us out early in the book by giving us the historical and geographical context of the steppe. He also explains the story behind the domestication and militarisation of the horse in a readable manner, which really helps us understand the rest of the book.

This context also allows us to follow Duducu as he begins to break down the many historical misconceptions we have about the steppe and its nomadic rulers, and also any that we might have about the legendary horse archers. Duducu brings the steppe to us in an engaging way while shedding light on an often-forgotten era of history.

The Devil's Horsemen looks at quite a niche area of history, but it brings it to us with a huge amount of depth, with links to Alexander the Great and the Soviet period, which makes for a fascinating read. Duducu also couples this depth with historical and regional breadth, with the story stretching from China to Germanic Western Europe, which allows us to really see the sheer scale of this history in a way we've never seen before. This is best shown in our favourite part of the book, which explains Attila the Hun's pivotal role in Roman General Flavius Aetius' crushing victory against King Gundahar and his Burgundian Kingdom in the fifth century. ***JvU***

★★★★☆

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HISTORY OF WAR RECOMMENDS…

JAMES HOLLAND & AL MURRAY
VICTORY '45
Out now!

Victory '45

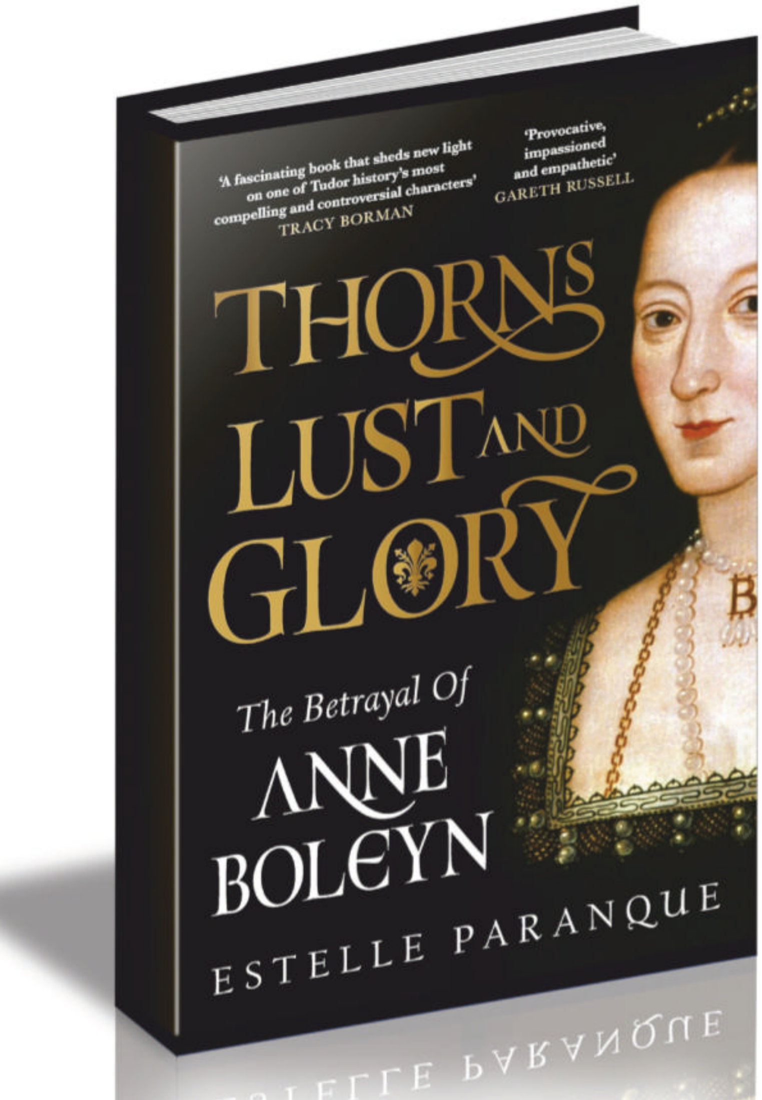
Author James Holland and Al Murray
Price £22 **Publisher** Bantam

Al Murray and James Holland's first written collaboration, marking the 80th anniversary of the Second World War's denouement, is entertaining, readable and rigorous, and an example of the best of popular history. *Victory '45* is a gripping, human-focussed account of the war's chaotic end that is well worth reading.

THORNS, LUST AND GLORY: THE BETRAYAL OF ANNE BOLEYN

Discover how the ill-fated queen rose to prominence

Author: Estelle Paranque **Publisher:** Ebury Press **Price:** £25 **Released:** Out now


'A fascinating book that sheds new light on one of Tudor history's most compelling and controversial characters' TRACY BORMAN
'Provocative, impassioned and empathetic' GARETH RUSSELL
THORNS LUST AND GLORY
The Betrayal Of ANNE BOLEYN
ESTELLE PARANQUE

"A fascinating and extremely engaging new angle on the life of the tragic queen"

In *Thorns, Lust and Glory: The Betrayal of Anne Boleyn*, Estelle Paranque revisits the oft-told story of the marriage of Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII. The book examines how she came to that fateful match, from her teenage years spent at the French court to her infamous execution. It is a tale that might seem to be as old as time but, perhaps surprisingly, Paranque finds new angles to hook even the most knowledgeable Tudor follower.

The 'betrayal' of Paranque's title comes from a potentially surprising angle, as she sets out to demonstrate that Boleyn was betrayed not only by her husband and the English court but also by France. Central to this book is an era in Anne's life that is often overlooked, namely the years she spent in France and the influences she was subjected to there.

This book is very clearly the product of an enormous amount of research, and Paranque ably evokes Boleyn's life and times and the characters with whom she came into contact. Women play a key supporting role in the story of Boleyn's formative years and the ambitions that the author suggests she nursed for the English court. *Thorns, Lust and Glory* also considers Boleyn's life in the wider context of European history, rather than focusing on the familiar story of her courtship and marriage and the tragedy that followed.

For Paranque, the key to Boleyn's approach to life at the Tudor court and her attempts to influence matters on the European stage can be found in her early years in France. There, argues Paranque, she observed court politics in action, and these lessons would later serve her at the court of Henry VIII in her attempts to become a political player and forge new alliances between France and England. What Boleyn didn't expect, however, was that the French would turn their backs on her at the moment of crisis.

Paranque vividly conjures up a world of intrigue and ambition, bringing her players to life with skill. Her book is highly readable and perfectly captures a world in which diplomacy could sometimes balance on a knife edge, at the mercy of sometimes mercurial powermongers. Though the book is populated by some larger-than-life monarchs and their courtiers, it never loses sight of the character at its centre and Boleyn, a familiar figure to most history enthusiasts, emerges as a woman of fierce intelligence and ambition who was neither saint nor sinner.

Thorns, Lust and Glory: The Betrayal of Anne Boleyn may well cover some familiar ground for the most devoted of Boleyn's followers, but it is refreshing to read a book that places its focus not on her life with Henry VIII but on the years made her the woman she became. Though deeply researched and authoritative, it is anything but dry and should appeal to a broad range of readers, from Tudor diehards to lovers of stories that are rich in intrigue and ill-fated ambition. ***CC***

★★★★☆

HISTORY VS HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen

THE ORDER

Director: Justin Kurzel **Starring:** Jude Law, Nicholas Hoult, Tye Sheridan **Country:** USA **Year:** 2024

Does this tense thriller accurately portray the rise of a terrorist threat?

VERDICT: A fictional story that helps to connect a sequence of real and terrifying events.

01 Jude Law's FBI agent Terry Husk is a fictional character, however he is based on real people. Husk is an amalgamation of the agents who worked in bringing The Order to justice. But all of his personality traits, family and background issues are fictional.

02 Bob Mathews (Hoult) is a real figure and was the leader of The Order. As in the film, he died during a standoff with FBI agents at his compound on Whidbey Island, Washington. It was burned down around him as he refused to exit the building.

03 The philosophy and tactics of The Order are shown as following the structure of a novel called *The Turner Diaries*. This is also based in reality and the book remains a controversial, provocative title promoting white nationalism and domestic terrorism.

ER WHITE UNITY WHITE AMERICA

04 The Order raises money for its planned coup against the United States government by robbing banks and armoured cars. This is true: their ultimate aim was for the northwest of the United States to secede and form a white nationalist state.

05 The moment that really brings a spotlight on The Order is the assassination of Jewish radio host Alan Berg (Marc Maron). This really happened, with Bruce Pierce (Sebastian Pigott) committing the murder as Berg was getting out of his car.

All images: © Alamy

Did you know? Stuffed dates were a popular snack enjoyed by spectators at the gladiatorial games.

STUFFED DATES

A DELICIOUS SWEET TREAT ENJOYED BY THE ROMAN ELITES

ANCIENT ROME, C.5TH CENTURY BCE

These tasty delicacies were primarily enjoyed by the wealthy upper-class citizens of Rome. A recipe for stuffed dates is among those compiled by Marcus Gavius Apicius in *De re coquinaria* that dates from the 5th century CE, perhaps the best source for ancient Roman recipes. Stuffed dates remain a popular sweet treat across the globe and can be found in markets in the Middle East and North Africa in particular. The version here is a more simplistic, contemporary take on Apicius' recipe, but optional instructions have been included if you want to follow his directions more closely.

Ingredients

- 15 large dates
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- ½ cup pine nuts (optional)
- 1 cup honey (optional)
- ⅓ cup sugar

Main image: © Alamy
Inset image: © Getty Images

METHOD

01 Cut a long incision lengthways across each of the dates – be careful not to slice them in two – just enough so they can be stuffed. If the date contains a pit, remove this.

02 Stuff the dates with your mixture. Whole or lightly chopped walnuts can be used. The ancient Roman recipe involves grinding the walnuts with a mortar and pestle, mixing in crushed pine nuts and pepper.

03 Do not overstuff your dates. Close them as much as possible to ensure the filling does not fall out.

04 If you want your dates to be closer to Apicius' original fifth-century recipe, carefully heat a cup of honey and add the dates to coat them.

05 If you're not using honey, place the sugar in a bowl and roll your dates in this.

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Image: © Getty Images

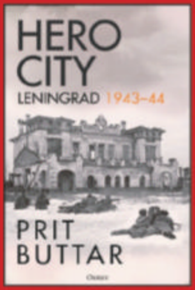
"A dynamic and engrossing read – Buttar captures the drama and detail of one of the most important campaigns of the Second World War."

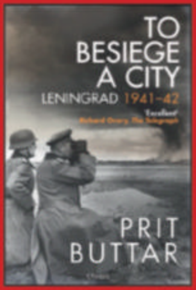
DAVID STAHEL

Author of *The Battle for Moscow*

BAGRATION 1944
THE GREAT SOVIET OFFENSIVE
PRIT BUTTAR
OSPREY

This is a gripping account of one of World War II's most crucial yet often overlooked campaigns.


HERO CITY
LENINGRAD 1943–44
PRIT BUTTAR


TO BESIEGE A CITY
LENINGRAD 1941–42
PRIT BUTTAR

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